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A TREATISE

ON

MORAL EVIDENCE,

ILLUSTRATED BY NUMEROUS EXAMPLES BOTH OF

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS,

BY

EDWARD ARTHUR SMEDLEY, M.A.
LATE CHAPLAIN OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Φράζευ ἕκαστα
Ἠνίοχον γνώμην στήσας καθύπερθεν ἀρίστην.—PYTHAG.

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PREFACE.

When a builder intends to build a house, his first object is to secure a good foundation. If, after the work has proceeded, flaws and defects appear in the superstructure, they may, doubtless, be soon remedied or removed. But if the foundation is unsound, and yet the house is built, the difficulty of remedying the evil becomes proportionably great. Nothing will serve but the pulling down of all the materials, and a recommencement of the work from the beginning.

So it is with principles. The mind of man recognises certain foundations, and on them builds a superstructure. But if his fundamental elements are bad, or if in his mental progress he admits any thing that is insufficient, then, before he can return to a healthy state of mind, he must pull down all that rests upon an inadequate support. Though the task

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be painful and laborious, and though he be compelled to descend to the very foundation, still the thing must be done.

This paramount necessity then being admitted, it will clearly be of proportionable importance, that we fully understand the proper use of the means by which we are to arrive at the possession of our elements, or, in other words, to obtain those truths which we so highly prize. Since right conduct implies a due reception of truth, if we are able to appreciate that which shews such truth, *i.e.* evidence, we have thus at least a power which is necessary to the discharge of our duty. We are like men who, being about to enter into battle, are at all events trained in handling and applying their weapons. We are as artists, sculptors, say, or painters, who, having good materials and suitable instruments, well know the art of using them.

It cannot be doubted that the Creator, intending men to imbue their minds with certain abstract principles of action, designed also that in the daily intercourse of life, as circumstances required, they should develop those principles

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by a practical application. On a given occasion truths are presented to the mind, of which being convinced, and understanding the relations founded on these truths, as well as armed with its abstract principles, it is thus prepared for action. In the following pages it is attempted to give specimens of the establishment of abstract principles, and in some degree to explain the manner of their application. Since, however, much that is adduced is exhibited principally in the way of example, it will probably in itself appear meagre and insufficient. Accordingly, for fuller information the Reader is referred to writers who treat professedly upon subjects which are here but incidentally introduced. Nevertheless, what is given may, we trust, be useful as far as it reaches; and it will at all events furnish illustration of the exercise of that great faculty by which man is distinguished, viz. the judicial faculty of appreciating truth.

A great question, as is well known, has arisen among moralists in regard to what is termed the moral sense, said to be naturally inherent in man. I am not ignorant, therefore, that

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objections may be urged against principles asserted in this treatise. If it appears that it has neither been attempted to answer such objections, nor indeed at all times to prove assertions, it is not necessarily because I am insensible of difficulties which may occur, or of solutions that may be offered, or of proofs that may be required: but it has seemed desirable to compress the materials which lay at hand into as short a space as possible, and to exhibit a succinct view of the whole subject proposed.

It may, however, be proper to introduce a few prefatory remarks, which will perhaps tend to smoothe difficulties, and which, being presented in this place, will not interfere with the thread of the main argument.

In the notion of a moral sense it is implied that men have a natural perception of right and wrong, together with a natural recognition of the former and rejection of the latter; and that they thus approve or disapprove of actions. Against this it is objected: When a child is born into the world, he is totally ignorant of all relations and objects contemplated in the

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ideas of virtue and vice. What notions can an infant have of chastity, covetousness, cruelty?

To which, as regards practical purposes, is it not a sufficient reply to say, These considerations do not shew that God, judging of the actions of man, may not accuse him as having conducted himself in a manner contrary to the sense of justice, *i.e.* the law of nature written in his heart? And though, from not having enjoyed the advantages of proper mental culture, whole bodies and classes of men may have recognised principles altogether wrong; yet this does not appear to shake the conviction that there is such a thing as a sense of justice to which the Creator may refer as intended to dwell in our hearts. In regard to the wild boy whom Paley mentions,* the question seems to be, not whether when first caught he would feel a disapprobation of wickedness, but whether when duly trained and instructed an appeal might not be made to his conscience. So with respect to an infant, not whether at his birth he discriminates, but whether as he

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, Bk. I. chap. 4.

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grows up, being properly disciplined, he does not acknowledge moral distinctions. It is very possible indeed that there may be a latent moral sense in the human mind which time and culture develop. If a seed lies buried in the earth, and in process of time, under the influence of the sun and rain, becomes at last a plant, what is the explanation of the phenomenon? In a child just born there are no traces of reason, no proofs of intelligence to distinguish him from a puppy.* Yet who would assert that reason is not naturally inherent in man? But whether the intellectual and moral powers be or be not latent in the infant, may perhaps seem rather a question of curious speculation than of real utility: and the time at which the moral sense is exhibited may be thought indifferent to our argument, provided that at length it does indeed appear; that, anterior to such appearance, there is no call for it, no responsibility respecting it; and that when exhibited, God can with propriety refer to it as shewing His will.

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* See Reid's Essays.

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It is admitted that God has endowed man with certain higher faculties, which elevate him above the brutes. Suppose now that when he is placed in a state of society, and made acquainted with various truths in which he is more or less concerned, the necessities of his condition, together with the exercise of these higher faculties and the operation of any spiritual influences received from God, produce a result, *i. e.* a peculiar tone of mind. Suppose that at all times and in all places he, as it were instinctively, acknowledges veracity, justice, regard to common good, as principles which ought to regulate human conduct. Does it not therefore follow that God, having intended these necessities of society, having instructed the mind to which He originally gave its powers, has now at least imposed a law for the observance of which He may justly hold man responsible? What if savage nations do recognise principles which we abominate? If the wild man caught in the woods be totally unfit for our state of society? If God, for the furtherance of wise purposes, has given one species of trial to one person or nation, another

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to another? We at least are not exempt from our own responsibilities. Christianity is revealed to some nations, is not revealed to others. Some men are born where religion in its purest form prevails. Others, though nominally Christians, are brought up in ignorance and bigotry; persecute, and are persecuted. Even in England, in our own day, some enjoy the highest advantages of leisure, civilization, education, intellect; others, sunk in poverty, are therefore naturally deprived of high mental cultivation. Still the Judge is just, and every one is answerable according to his powers and opportunities.

Nevertheless, under all circumstances, how ready is the human heart to admit appeals to certain primary principles, if those appeals are well and wisely made. However untruly, unjustly, cruelly a man may be acting, yet he will hardly with barefaced callousness avow that he is untrue, unjust, cruel; that it is his will and pleasure so to be: but he will endeavour to palliate his enormities, to reconcile, sophistically it is true, still to reconcile his proceedings with what he admits to be the law given for his obedience, or, "with necessity, the

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tyrant's plea," will excuse "his devilish deeds." Nevertheless he has a plea, however poor; and this in reality implies a law and a sense of responsibility.

But as an objection to the notion of a moral sense, it is further urged, that, under given circumstances, the minds of men of even high culture will differ as to the line of action proper to be pursued. One man's mind will dictate to him one course, another man's another. This diversity then seems to indicate not the sure law of the Creator, but some fantastic and supple rule unworthy of His unchangeable character, and on which dependence cannot be placed.

To which it seems open to the advocates of a moral sense to make some such reply as the following.

It is of course supposed that the mind of a person called upon to act is honest, otherwise the objection at once vanishes. For if he proceeds in opposition to what is really the dictate of his conscience, and knowingly does what he is sensible is wrong, it does not follow that the will of God is not clearly revealed to him, but

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it simply appears that he is determined to follow the bent of his own will. Though he may make a pretence of conscience, yet the case is really not in point; nor can his alleged difference from the judgment of another man, placed in similar circumstances, be counted of any weight at all. But admit that a man's conscience honestly leads him to one course of conduct, while that of another, of apparently similar education, placed in a similar position, points to another. The question, however, occurs: Be the outward appearance of things what it may, still are the consciences of each duly purified and enlightened? The Deity indeed, Who ever contemplates the full brilliancy of truth, clearly perceives the conduct proper to be adopted by a particular man, under given circumstances. But if two men, on the same occasion, sincerely differ; might not further reflection, a fuller examination of principles, a deeper probing of their own hearts, lead to unity? But after all how difficult is it to shew that two persons, under the same given circumstances, really do come to different conclusions. For though certain apparent circumstances may

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be the same, still others which (imperceptibly perhaps) qualify the views of each, are entirely different. For instance, suppose the whole experience of one man's life has led him to attach peculiar importance to one set of notions, that of the other man to another set, and thus, in a given case, they clash; then in reality one judges upon the following evidence, *i. e.* the circumstances of the given case, together with all other matters bearing upon it, which his experience has supplied in the course of many years. Similarly the other. Hence, as they arrive at results built upon different foundations, they may very possibly and naturally differ. Who shall say that the Deity, making due allowances, may not approve of the conclusions to which both of these persons in their respective positions have come, though such conclusions be directly opposed to each other? Who shall say that the objects contemplated by the Divine Mind were not the discipline and moral trial of the men, while the course of action adopted or the thing done has (irrespectively of such discipline and trial) been a matter of secondary importance, or of no im-

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portance at all? Thus when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the thing enjoined was not the object: the intention was to try Abraham's faith. Again, cases of conscience often occur, which are in truth of the most perplexing kind, and where much weighty argument may be adduced on both sides. Now though the pretence of difficulties where they do not exist, as a mere subterfuge and evasion, cannot be too strongly reprobated; still it is easy to perceive, that in really difficult cases the most enlightened of mankind may honestly arrive at different conclusions. On such occasions a wise man, duly estimating the position, would naturally shrink from delivering his judgment, unless imperatively required. In the various business of life, however, there are these urgent calls, designed doubtless to serve the purposes of moral trial and discipline; and all that we can do is to act honestly to the best of our ability, committing the issue to God.

The objections which have been mentioned seem at least mitigated by these answers But a mass of positive evidence may be adduced by those who assert the existence of a

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moral sense. Let us see what Bishop Butler alleges on this point.

"That which renders beings capable of moral government, is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensions: so also are we. But, additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought: and on doing this, we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and of good desert; and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert. That we have this moral, approving and disapproving faculty, is certain, from our experiencing it in ourselves, and recognising it in each other. It appears in our exercising it unavoidably, in the approbation and disapprobation even of feigned characters; from the words, right and wrong, odious and amiable, base and worthy, with many others of like signification in all languages, applied to actions and characters; from the many written systems of morals, which suppose it, since it cannot be imagined that

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all these authors, throughout all these treatises, had absolutely no meaning at all to their words, or a meaning merely chimerical; from our natural sense of gratitude, which implies a distinction between merely being the instrument of good, and intending it; from the like distinction every one makes, between injury and mere harm, which Hobbes says is peculiar to mankind; and between injury and just punishment, a distinction plainly natural, prior to the consideration of human laws. It is manifest, great part of common language, and of common behaviour over the world, is formed upon supposition of such a moral faculty; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a perception of the understanding, or as a sentiment of the heart,* or, which seems the truth, as including both. Nor is it at all doubtful in the general, what course of action this faculty or practical discerning power within us ap-

* We find this sentence printed "as a sentiment of the understanding, or as a perception of the heart." As Stewart however observes, there is surely a typographical error.

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proves, and what it disapproves. For, as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists, or whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars; yet, in general, there is in reality an universally acknowledged standard of it. It is that which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public: it is that which every man you meet puts on the show of: it is that which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth, make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind, namely justice, veracity, and regard to common good."*

Is not this conclusive?

Because controversies have been carried on in regard to the moral sense, Paley dismisses the question; and taking what he calls a surer road, proceeds to his maxim of expediency. This doctrine of expediency he applies, to the establishment, for example, of such a principle as that of gratitude. Now certainly so high a principle is worthy of all the support by which it is

* Butler. Dissertation "Of the Nature of Virtue."

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possible to maintain it; and therefore, as auxiliary we may take what Paley gives: still do we not needlessly surrender what altogether belongs to us, unless we directly and strongly assert this principle, as at once recognised by that faculty which recognises justice and benevolence?

While touching upon this point, I will take the opportunity of adding, that in the succeeding pages, recourse has been had to any source which was open for the establishment of the principles asserted. Thus natural reason and Scripture, considerations of justice and expediency, other men's ideas as well as my own have been jointly applied. It has likewise frequently been my endeavour to support and illustrate my arguments by analogy. For (as says a learned writer*) from "the numerous similitudes and analogies which our Lord employed on all occasions to convey His supernatural truths to men, we may infer that this method of reasoning is especially consecrated to the service of religion." ..... In the kingdoms both of nature and of grace, the God of all truth is wonderfully

* Tatham. Bampton Lectures.

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consistent in the mode of its dispensation: and analogy is the intellectual instrument, by which in one no less than in the other, man is enabled to ascend from earth to heaven. From the curves and motions of projectiles, we have beheld the astronomer rising by a sublime analogy to those of the celestial bodies:" and thus in the moral world we naturally ascend from earthly things to heavenly. Let it be allowed then to establish and illustrate our truths in every possible manner. Though "the rain descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon a house," still as its foundations are stronger, the greater is its stability. Accordingly, the more firmly moral and religious principles are established in the human heart, the more probable is it that man will overcome the difficulties and temptations, to which, by the permission or decree of a wise Providence, he is perpetually exposed.

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ERRATUM.

Page 179, line 6, *erase the word* 'instinctive.'

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BOOK I.

CONSIDERATIONS UPON MORAL EVIDENCE, PREVIOUS TO THE RECOGNITION OF CHRISTIANITY.

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CHAPTER I.

STATE OF MIND SUPPOSED TO LEAD A MAN TO INQUIRY.

IMAGINE a man placed in the world; brought up under authority and example; pursuing the course in which he is directed without much consideration; doing as he sees others do; or urged perhaps to very questionable lines of conduct by incitements peculiar to his own disposition and temperament. It is clear therefore that his present behaviour is such, that it can scarcely be said to be founded upon any high principle: for principles are the result of thought, and he has not hitherto been led to think.

The case imagined is no extraordinary one. The condition is that of multitudes.

Suppose, however, that as the mind is expanded, and his reasoning powers are strengthened, he is arrested in the heedless course which he pursues by some check, no matter what, some painful revulsion perhaps of feeling, which creates a pause, and throws him back on the resources of his own reason and conscience.

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Conceive him then, not immediately perhaps, nor easily, but after some time, and with labour, it may be, and difficulty, to adopt such a train of thought as the following:

"I am a man; an inhabitant of the earth; living in a society of beings similar to myself; connected with them by numerous relations and ties; susceptible of various feelings and affections; urged by appetites; surrounded by objects to which these feelings, affections, and appetites answer and correspond; possessing also higher faculties which distinguish me from the mere animals, and elevate me as superior.

"Hence, further, it is plain that I may not be quiescent: though afflicted by disappointment, I may not for the future prevent the possibility of such disappointment, by determining to drag on an unharassed life in lethargic indifference. On the contrary, I am constantly required to act. Even if I had both the power and the will (and yet how strange and harsh would be the exercise of such power!) to stifle a multitude of natural affections and desires, still the very animal wants of my body would force me to mark out objects for attainment. Moreover I have been taught, and am convinced, that to direct his powers to the accomplishment of objects is a primary and fundamental prin-

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ciple of man's nature. A necessity, unconnected with the satisfaction of the appetites and the preservation of life, compels me to carry out this principle. My mind, with an earnestness which it is impossible to despise, craves that to which it may devote itself.

"But results follow actions. A design with which I act is to obtain results. It may however be my object to avoid results. To take a very simple instance. As on the one hand I know that fire, when not too nearly approached, will comfort and cherish me, and accordingly I avail myself of the good; so, on the other hand, it being clear that fire will scorch, I am moved by a natural and instinctive feeling of self-preservation to avoid its too close proximity, and thus I escape the evil. In such a case as this, then, I have motives which at once direct my conduct, when I am convinced that certain things are true.

"But in general it is plain that results may be either desirable or not desirable, good or evil: and numerous truths are not so manifest at a first glance, as is the proposition that fire will scorch, and yet after some consideration are clearly discernible: and it is certain that men continually make mistakes in what they acknowledge to be matters of great importance: it

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behoves me therefore, as a fallible man, to take great pains, in order that I may make the best use of the powers I possess, and may be able to judge what is good, what evil, and what moreover are the means by which to obtain the former and to avoid the latter: for the means are not always so simple as when I approach the fire in order that I may be warmed, or remove my body lest I should be scorched; yet it is manifest that if I am to accomplish objects, I must use means suitable to such accomplishment, and to the end that I may use them, I must know them.

"Accordingly, if to mark out objects for attainment be an irresistible principle of my nature, what is the value of the saying which has been told me, "as to choose an end distinguishes a man from a beast, so to choose a good end is the distinction of a good man."* At least I may assume that some things are to be considered objects of choice, open perhaps to my hand, and, like ripe fruit, ready to be plucked, or, it may be, hard to be attained; other things again are presented, which it behoves me to reject either easily and at once, or with difficulty and trouble. In short, to choose the good, and

* Jeremy Taylor.

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to reject the evil, is an elementary principle of my guidance through life: while to search for truths preliminary and preparatory to such choice or rejection, is altogether indispensable as a mean to an end; and the search therefore must necessarily be pursued, even though at great cost of pains and labour."

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CHAPTER II.

INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL TRUTH.

Our inquirer's state of mind then is this: he recognizes the obligation of diligently applying the faculties with which he is endowed: he has motives compelling him to search for Truth.

This truth may in his case be called Moral Truth; which, it may be observed, is essentially different from mere Intellectual Truth. A proposition which declares a truth abstractedly from all considerations of propriety of conduct, may be said to enunciate an intellectual truth. For example: the sun now shines; on such a day lightning struck the spire of a particular church; the Duke of Wellington vanquished the French at Waterloo; the force of gravity attracts bodies to the centre of the earth;—these, for the present at least, and in accordance with the principle of considering them abstractedly, we may call intellectual truths; they may or they may not hereafter be connected with questions of moral conduct: if so connected, they

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will then become moral truths. But our inquirer seeks for moral truth. He wishes to know what things relating to human conduct are true, in order that he may act suitably to such truths, as a man placed in the world.

Accordingly it is clear that, though intellectual truths may be obtained, which may not in any perceptible manner be connected with moral truths; still moral truths must involve the consideration of truths submitted to the intellect. The perception therefore of intellectual truth is a natural preliminary to the appreciation of that which is moral.

Whatsoever shews us either intellectual or moral truth may be called the Evidence thereof. The evidence which shews that the Duke of Wellington conquered the French is the concurrent testimony of all men. The proof that it is proper for men to eat food is made up of several different parts: there is the evidence that food will support life; the instinctive love of life; the appetite of hunger.

While therefore the evidence of intellectual truth shews that things have been, are, will be; the evidence of moral truth shews that they have been, are, will be, ought to be. Thus not only are we convinced that Queen Victoria is the sovereign of England; that Napoleon Buona-

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parte died at St. Helena; that a vine, if it produces fruit next autumn, will bear grapes and not apples; but also that if a man's life is in danger he ought to adopt means of preservation.

To afford assistance in appreciating moral evidence, and to exhibit facts and principles which may serve for illustration, and may also themselves be of advantage in guiding conduct, are the objects of this treatise.

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CHAPTER III.

INTELLECTUAL TRUTH.

REVERTING to the consideration of mere intellectual truth, we find that the evidence which manifests the certainty of propositions is of two kinds. "Some truths (says Mill) are known directly and of themselves; some through the medium of other truths." Those which are known thus mediately are the subject of inference: but those which are known directly are original premises from which others are inferred. "Our assent to the conclusion being grounded upon the truth of the premisses, we never could arrive at any knowledge by reasoning, unless something could be known antecedently to all reasoning."*

We obtain knowledge directly from our powers of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling. This is the evidence of our senses: and what is

* Mill's Logic, p. 6. Though his words are here used, still the text presents views slightly varied from those which he has given.

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thus presented, we without doubt admit. If I see a house fall, I am at once immediately assured of the catastrophe. But if some one tells me the thing has happened, various considerations may warrant the conclusion that my informant is worthy of credit, and therefore I infer that the house has fallen.

Again, we feel certain emotions in our minds—anger, hope, fear, sorrow, joy—of which we are at once conscious. But if I observe the gestures of an angry man, the contortions of his countenance, the glare of his eyes, or if I hear his words and mark their violence, I infer from these outward signs that he is really angry.

Also memory preserves in our minds the truths which we have imbibed. I know of my own knowledge that at a certain time yesterday I was hungry. I knew it at the time, and as I have the power of memory, the knowledge remains. But I infer, that an hour ago my informant told me truly there had been a shipwreck, for even at the time he told me I was obliged to infer the truth.

Again, according to Mill (vol. I. p. 9), "it is universally allowed, that the existence of matter or of spirit, of space or of time, is in its nature unsusceptible of being proved." These things we know immediately.

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In regard to some truths, it may perhaps be controverted, whether they are to be considered as known directly, or by inference, or possibly in both ways. It seems however unnecessary, especially at the present stage of our inquiry, to pursue these topics further. Suffice it to remark, that much the greater portion of our knowledge depends upon inference.* The term "self-evident" has been applied to truths which are known immediately. All truths however which we admit must have something that shews them to the human mind, and in this they differ from such truths as are hidden from our view. On what ground soever, therefore, propositions claim assent, we are still at liberty to adhere to our definition; *i.e.* whatever shews us that things are true, may be called the evidence of such truth.

* "The power of reasoning (says Reid) is justly accounted one of the prerogatives of human nature, because by it many important truths have been and may be discovered, which without it would be beyond our reach: yet it seems to be only a kind of crutch to a limited understanding. We can conceive an understanding superior to human, to which that truth appears intuitively, which we can only discover by reasoning."

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CHAPTER IV.

VARIOUS DEGREES OF EVIDENCE, SHEWING THAT THINGS HAVE BEEN, ARE, WILL BE.

In their considerations of abstract truth, men are sometimes apt to imagine that the constitution of nature might have been different from what it is: evidence (they think) might in all cases have shewn them with absolute demonstration, that things have been, are, will be, have not been, are not, will not be: or, in other words, truth and falsehood might have been always plain, and error physically impossible. But experience shews that such is not the condition of man. Our faculties are limited. We learn things by evidence of various degrees in strength and cogency. It is physically possible, that even in cases where we rely upon the evidence of our senses, we may be mistaken: for sometimes the sensibility of the organs themselves is impaired; at other times they are rendered inefficient by the novelty and strangeness of the circumstances in which their powers are required. So again in regard to inference: I

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may confide in the veracity of a witness, still I know that men do not always speak truth. Hence, though we ever desire great strength of proof, and sometimes indeed with a morbid craving, our circumstances nevertheless are such that we are obliged to estimate inferior degrees of evidence: and how much soever we may wish to be at once assured that things are certainly true or certainly false, we yet weigh, laboriously it may be and with diligence, that which shews they are probably true, or doubtful, or probably false.

There is one species of evidence which forces conviction with wonderful power. Thus, for instance, if it be granted that the definitions in Euclid's Elements are consistent, and the axioms true, we infer the equality of the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle with overwhelming and irresistible strength: every reasonable mind is at once compelled to recognition, and perceives that no objection can for an instant stand.* The process of reasoning thus employed is called Mathematical.

It is certain that those things which we receive directly,† are admitted with a very high

* "Every link (it is said) of the Mathematical chain is of equal, that is, the utmost strength."

† See last Chapter.

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degree of assurance. "What one sees or feels, whether bodily or mentally, one cannot but be sure that one sees or feels. No science is required for the purpose of establishing such truths; no rules of art can render our knowledge of them more certain than it is in itself. There is no logic for this portion of our knowledge."*

Again, the testimony of witnesses is of remarkable cogency. Men naturally speak the truth, unless there be some motive inducing them to lie. But in any given case I may know the character of a witness, and the circumstances under which he delivers his testimony. I may hence be altogether convinced that his statements are true, more especially if essentially probable, or confirmed by independent witnesses. What but the force of united testimony assures us that Louis XVI., king of France, was beheaded? If the general of an army employs a guide, who knows that if he misleads, he will instantly be put to death, such knowledge is a security more or less powerful for his truth. If a minister of the British Crown states in parliament, that he has just received intelligence of a serious insurrection in some

* See Mill again.

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part of Europe, known to be disaffected to its government, who can doubt his veracity?

So also inferences, not mathematical, nor those which shew the truth of testimony, may yet be deduced from circumstances of which we have certain knowledge, in such a way that the power of the inferences may be overwhelming. There has been a violent hailstorm (suppose). It breaks the skylights of your house. After it has ceased, you walk into your garden, and find every pane in the green-house (which half-an-hour ago you saw entire) demolished. The inference that the hail has destroyed the glass is irresistible. From one o'clock A.M. to four, snow has fallen: early in the morning I observe the footmarks of a hare impressed on my field: I may safely conclude, that in the last few hours such an animal has really crossed the land. On the shore of an island in the Pacific inhabited by naked savages, a mariner finds a seal, worked with all the skill of a jeweller, and bearing an English device. At least he may infer that the savages were not the artists.

But again, there is plainly an innumerable multitude of truths, which in the common business of life we are perpetually required to infer; though it be acknowledged that the inferences are less close than the inferences

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of mathematicians, less cogent than those by which we receive very strong testimony, or than such as we have just been contemplating. For example, you receive perhaps a letter by the post; signed apparently by a person with whose handwriting you are acquainted; bearing the post-mark of a town where you know him to be; conveying such information as he might be likely to transmit; written in his customary style. You are not at all disposed to think that the letter is other than genuine; your confidence is strong; you are ready to act thereupon. Yet the proof has not the strength of mathematical reasoning. Your letter, after all, may be a forgery. The evidence however is of that highly probable character, which experience shews is sufficient for the ordinary purposes of life. It is so powerful, that it convinces you of the truth sought to be established, and compels you to the assumption thereof, if your conduct is concerned.

It sometimes happens, that a variety of circumstances, each of which individually may be of small importance, do, by their combined effect, establish a fact to a very high degree of assurance. A man has been convicted of murder, upon a fully sufficient chain of circumstantial evidence. Assuredly the punishment assigned to the crime is dreadful; and there may have

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been a difficulty in fully appreciating the force, derived from union, of the facts which proved guilt. Accordingly it has been said by one whose feelings were shocked, that he as a juryman would never convict a man accused of murder upon circumstantial evidence. Such a declaration, originating in kindness, was nevertheless totally indefensible. Circumstances which, when isolated, shew nothing, may by union produce an irresistible force of evidence. The person by whom that declaration was made, would have received direct testimony. Yet may not a witness lie? May we not conceive a body of circumstances, all tending to the establishment of the same fact, with such clearness and power, that it may be more improbable those circumstances should mislead, than a witness should lie? If so, we have a test by which to try the relative weight of evidence in the two cases. Indeed, as regards the attainment of truth, it may matter little, of what kind be the evidence adduced. We chiefly consider, whether it exhibits such a high degree of probability, as to produce conviction in the mind of him to whom it is addressed.

It is not long since the minds of men were occupied by the consideration of a remarkable trial at Norwich. In this case the union of

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many circumstances clearly proved the guilt of the accused. An armed man, whose countenance is disguised, with unexampled boldness enters a house inhabited by numerous inmates, kills the proprietor and his son, wounds the son's wife and one of the servants, and so escapes. Several eye-witnesses, under the solemn sanction of an oath, declare their confident opinion, that a certain tenant of the deceased is the man: they judge by his general manner and bearing, by the appearance of his head, and the peculiar mode in which he carries it: the probability of their judging rightly is admitted from the consideration that they have been constantly accustomed to see the accused, and thus have had opportunities of becoming well acquainted with his personal carriage and demeanour. It is testified moreover by a woman, who has lived in an improper intimacy with the prisoner, that he was absent from his own residence, distant a mile from the scene of the murders, for an hour and a half at the very time they were perpetrated: immediately before this absence, he was sorrowful and uttered words implying that he meditated some difficult enterprize: after his return he was pale and agitated: and in the course of the succeeding night, he told this woman to state, in reply to any questions

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which might be asked, that his absence from home had not been for more than ten minutes. It is proved further, that the accused has, on several occasions previous to the murders, exhibited hostile feelings to the deceased, has in fact published a pamphlet shewing his enmity: again, he has drawn up forged documents, signed, as is pretended, by the elder of the murdered men, which documents could scarcely be established while he remained alive to deny the signature.

Such are the principal circumstances on which the accusation rests. The evidence is strengthened and the effect heightened by a variety of minor facts. The prisoner adduces much irrelevant matter, and tells a most improbable story in his defence.

It is admitted however that the woman with whom he cohabited, did in her first deposition state, that he really had not been absent more than ten minutes; and therefore her two accounts differed in a matter of essential importance. Nevertheless her last declaration is given with such appearance of truth, and she so well sustains the severe cross-examination, to which she is subjected for many hours, that the jury believe her testimony. Accordingly, after a long inquiry, the accused is found guilty; a great

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criminal is deservedly punished; and society receives the only compensation which under the circumstances can be awarded.*

It not unfrequently occurs, that the admission of truth depends upon a right decision between conflicting evidence; and hence perhaps arise some of the greatest difficulties to our limited capacities. Let us again borrow illustration from the proceedings of our courts of justice. Witnesses, it may be, depose to the truth of certain facts; other witnesses make declarations inconsistent with the statements of the former. One says the prisoner was at a certain time in a given place; another, that he saw him at the same time in a place a hundred miles distant. We come to the conclusion therefore, that one of the two says what is untrue. We are perplexed, and can only be extricated by considering various other circumstances connected with the matter in hand. The witnesses are cross-examined; the statements they make in the course of this

* The strength of evidence arising from the union of many arguments is beautifully illustrated by Reid: "Such evidence (he says) may be compared to a rope made up of many slender filaments twisted together. The rope has strength more than sufficient to bear the stress laid upon it, though no one of the filaments of which it is composed would be sufficient for that purpose."

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cross-examination are put together, and weighed jointly; their manner and behaviour during the inquiry are estimated; their character, it may be, is known; a multitude of circumstances, which it is impossible to enumerate, influences the minds of those who are appointed to judge; and thus, in the end, possibly truth is elicited.

A curious example of conflicting evidence recently occurred in the county of Kent. A woman walking along the streets of Dover at an early hour in the morning, is attacked by a soldier and robbed of her money. She immediately proceeds to the barracks, and makes her complaint to the military authorities; the soldiers are all ordered to appear before her, and she singles out the man. She declares his identity in a court of justice, such declaration being of course confirmed by an oath. Her testimony is given in a clear and direct manner, and no one admits the idea that she intends to deceive. Here then *primâ facie* is strong evidence of the guilt of the accused. But two other witnesses appear, officers of his regiment, who affirm that at the time of the robbery they saw him asleep in his quarters at the barracks. In consideration of their assertions, the prisoner is acquitted.

With reference to the testimony of the woman

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it may be observed, that if one person has never seen another, except for a short time under exciting circumstances, a subsequent mistake as to identity does sometimes occur; whereas, if you are well acquainted with any one, you at a single glance recognize his features.

In the case of the soldier there was a contest of probabilities. The stronger evidence lay on the side of the accused. But if the probabilities had been equal he would have been entitled to an acquittal, since it is the business of an accuser to prove his allegations.

Thus then, in a manner like to that in which men act as individuals, the business of our courts is transacted. Truth (say) is obtained, (it may be after diligent and laborious search, not as in the simple case in which we know that fire will warm or scorch), still it is obtained as a mean to an end: *i.e.* whenever an allegation is established by sufficient proof, it is so established, in order that the judge may act for the good of society, in accordance with the principle of choosing the good and rejecting the evil. He therefore directs his conduct suitably to the truth that is discovered, and inflicts a punishment which may suffice for the terror of evil-doers, and, as far as possible, for the suppression of crime.

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From what has been said, it easily appears that probable evidence, even such as is sufficient to produce conviction, admits an infinite number of degrees. Thus, suppose the certainty of a fact is established by the testimony of several credible witnesses—if you please, four. You are here convinced. But if one or even two were withdrawn, you would still have sufficient proof. If again, instead of four, you had five, six, seven, eight, any number; each additional witness would give additional confirmation.

Much more then may the degrees be multiplied, if we take into account not only evidence causing conviction, but that also which shews a thing to be in common language "probably true,"* although such evidence be not altogether sufficient to convince the mind.

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* In common language, when we say that "a thing is probably true," we scarcely contemplate such strength of evidence as arises from the concurrent testimony of two or three unsuspected and independent witnesses. What we do contemplate may be exemplified in such instances as the following. If I, a healthy man, not advanced in years, undertake to write this treatise, it is probably true that I shall live to accomplish it. Again, it is probably true that in the first fortnight of next April there will be showers of rain. Some persons, however, may perhaps be shocked by hearing the mention of the word "probable" in cases where the evidence is of a very high character, and where

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Probable evidence therefore manifestly admits innumerable degrees. There are innumerable degrees of that species which compels conviction; innumerable also of that which is implied, when we say a thing is probably true.

Butler says, "That which chiefly constitutes probability is implied in the word Likely, *i. e.* like some truth or true event, *veri simile.*" Again, he speaks of such *likeness* as begetting in us a "presumption, opinion, and full conviction, which the human mind is formed to receive

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they may conceive that the only proper term is "certain." Still, though a conviction produced upon the mind be thus overwhelming, the expression "probable evidence" may be allowed as philosophically correct. "A low presumption (writes Butler) often repeated will amount even to moral certainty. Thus a man's having observed the ebb and flow of the tide to-day, affords some sort of presumption, though the lowest imaginable, that it may happen again tomorrow; but the observation of this event for so many days and months and ages together, as it has been observed by mankind, gives us a full assurance that it will." Again, with reference to the same subject, "No man (he says) can make a question but that the sun will rise tomorrow, and be seen, where it is seen at all, in the figure of a circle, and not in that of a square." In common language I might say, that if I go to London tomorrow, I shall find the general aspect of the town much the same as it was yesterday. Yet any one might have made a similar remark in regard to Lisbon, who proposed going thither on the day of the earthquake.

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from it, and which it does necessarily produce in every one." As has already been remarked, how much soever we may wish at once to be assured that things are certainly not true or certainly true, we are yet obliged laboriously to weigh what shews them to be probably not true or doubtful or probably true. According to Butler, "doubt as much presupposes evidence, lower degrees of evidence, as belief presupposes higher, and certainly higher still. Any one who will a little attend to the nature of evidence, will easily carry this observation on, and see that between no evidence at all, and that degree of it which affords ground of doubt, there are as many intermediate degrees, as there are between that degree which is the ground of doubt and demonstration."*

It may be well to conclude this chapter with the following observations of Butler. "Probable evidence in its very nature affords but an imperfect kind of information; and is to be considered as relative only to beings of limited

* He considers the case of an even chance to be that in which *doubt* is implied; and in using the expression "where there is no evidence at all," he contemplates "a number of facts so and so circumstanced, which should accidentally come into the mind," against the truth of which there would be a presumption of millions to one.

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capacities. For nothing, which is the possible object of knowledge, whether past, present, or future, can be probable to an infinite intelligence: since it cannot but be discerned, as it is in itself, certainly true or certainly false. But to us probability is the very guide of life."

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CHAPTER V.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE INQUIRER.

But we may now suppose that our inquirer, having accompanied us in such a train of thought as has been developed in the preceding chapters, may find himself somewhat perplexed by the conclusions which have been exhibited: he may feel difficulty in admitting that things are, have been, will be, and in conducting himself agreeably to such admission; when confessedly the evidence is only of a probable and not of a demonstrative character; nay more, when it is presented under various shades and degrees of probability, to which it is difficult to assign a fixed and definite limit.

"I am willing (he may say) fully to recognize a great portion of what has been adduced. I know when I am angry, sorrowful, joyful. I am convinced of the reality of what I hear and see. Wherever, again, I admit the premises of a proposition in Euclid, I accept the inferences, which so inevitably follow that it is impossible

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to deny them. Moreover I am not unwilling to receive testimony of a high order. Assuredly the Duke of Wellington did conquer the French at Waterloo. Ordinarily too I believe the assertions of witnesses whose character is irreproachable. But my mind being thus prepared to receive truths which I know directly,* and to admit the principle of inference, you require me to extend my concessions; not only to draw inferences which appear somewhat loose from things that I know immediately of my own knowledge, and to draw rigorously close inferences from premises of which I am obliged, with some difficulty perhaps, to infer the truth; but moreover, from premises in regard to which I feel difficulty, you bid me deduce inferences with respect to which I feel difficulty likewise; and so, even in matters of great importance, you would persuade me to act. Now though conclusions thus obtained may be supported with some colour of probability, still am I embarrassed: for my imagination points out ways, in which it is physically possible that I may be deceived; and what is there to guarantee me from error? But again, there is perhaps something more than mere imagination, *i. e.* evidence of real weight, shew-

* See Chap. III.

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ing a possibility of the negative of such assertions as you, upon the strength of a certain body of probable evidence allege to be true; yet you still demand my assent to the truth of your allegations, as a preliminary to action. You speak even of a contest of probabilities. You lead me on, step by step, from admissions which I cannot avoid, until I find myself altogether startled by the contemplation of the position in which you endeavour to place me. For the truth of what you say, you appeal to experience. You declare that such *is* the common course of human life and conduct, and that indeed we are forced thus to act. You illustrate your assertion by reference to the course of proceedings in our courts of law: and what is thus recognized by the common sense of men, is no doubt worthy of consideration.

"My experience, however, is limited. The prospect of life and action lies before me; while the retrospect is little more than that of boyhood. In regard to the trial at Norwich, may it not be said, that if the defence had been more skilfully conducted, the appearance of the case would have been much modified? The prisoner might have abstained from all irrelevant matter. He need not have adduced his improbable story, which was at once considered a falsehood. It

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was open to him to have alleged that the circumstance of his known hostility to the murdered man, marked as it was by the circulation of a pamphlet, had predisposed the minds of the servants; and accordingly, when they saw the disguised assassin, a person of the same stature and proportions as himself, they at once erroneously concluded that he was of necessity the man. The accused did indeed endeavour to make it appear that the woman with whom he cohabited might naturally entertain vindictive feelings; for he had refused to marry her, and intended to break off the connexion: and it might have been contended, with some colour of reason, that as she had contradicted herself in a matter of very great importance, and was therefore proved to be false, her testimony could not under any circumstances avail. Besides, it was admitted by implication in the opening speech of the counsel for the prosecution, that there was room for clear proof of an *alibi*,* and that such proof, if the prisoner could adduce it, would establish his innocence: did not the possibility then of this *alibi* shew the possibility of innocence? Ought men therefore, under

* "It would behove the prisoner (he said) to shew where he was at the time of the murder."

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such circumstances, to accept the guilt of the accused as a fixed and certain truth, on which to adopt so serious a measure as the deliberate destruction of human life?

"Moreover, it has been recently stated in parliament, as a certain truth, that in England innocent men have not unfrequently been hanged.

"But as regards the case of the soldier at Dover. Here in the first instance you had probable evidence of guilt; so that the jury would have convicted him, and he would actually have suffered punishment, had not witnesses, who knew him, shewn that he was asleep. May not what would have happened in his case, if there had not been such exculpatory testimony, happen in any case similar in all respects, save this, that equally strong evidence can not be brought forward in defence? And may not thus the most serious errors be committed?

"Under such difficulties therefore I crave further explanation and information."

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CHAPTER VI.

ANSWERS TO THE OBJECTIONS OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

We must now therefore endeavour to mitigate or to answer the objections of our inquirer, and accordingly we may perhaps be allowed to present to him some such observations as the following.

"You say that your experience is limited: you are yet but young. Be it so. But you therefore owe, and are probably willing to pay, respect to the declarations of others who have had opportunities of more extensive observation than yourself, and of whose honesty you are convinced. Such persons will unanimously testify what they have learned by many years' experience of the common affairs of life; *i.e.* that men both must and do continually act upon belief much less strong than is produced by means of the senses; upon inferences many degrees less close than those of mathematical proof; in short, upon the impressions caused by probable evidence.

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Where indeed they can get such proof as you willingly admit, they gladly take it; but where it is not to be obtained, they are content with the lower sort. According to Jeremy Taylor, "in moral things there cannot ordinarily be a demonstrative or mathematical certainty; and in morality we call that certain, that is a thing to be followed and chosen, which oftentimes is but very highly probable; and many things do not attain that degree." Moreover, the experience of mankind in general convinces them, that by taking this highly probable evidence, they ordinarily obtain truth: after they have acted, fresh events continually arise, which verify the soundness of the principles on which they have proceeded.

"Again, though it be confessed that your experience has been but short, still it may teach you much. Even in childhood persons are prepared for the difficulties of future life. As a child you received without hesitation whatever information or instruction was communicated by your parents or teachers; in fact, you placed confidence in their superior knowledge, and reverenced their authority. Living under a system of management and discipline, you were constantly obliged to judge upon probable evidence (even such as now creates difficulty to your mind),

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what were the will and intentions of your superiors; of what they would be likely to approve, of what to disapprove. Again, you believed the statements of your schoolfellows and playmates in matters in which you were interested. If indeed experience proved that one of them was deceitful and treacherous, you knew how to estimate the value of such experience, and in cases where he might have a motive for falsehood, to doubt his truth. Still you knew how to discriminate between him and others who had never been suspected.

"Even at this early period of life, a number of slight circumstances, which when isolated shewed nothing, did by their combined effect frequently manifest the characters of those with whom you were connected, and accordingly did influence your conduct. It is possible that you may have even been required to judge between conflicting probabilities. At all events, you were continually compelled to appreciate the force of probable evidence, and were thus ordinarily led to truth, of which truth subsequent experience has no doubt supplied numerous verifications.

"But we may probe this matter more deeply. It is clear that you will not, neither ought you to stop at this point of your investigation. You

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have been brought up then under authority, and initiated in the elements of religion. You have been taught to acknowledge the existence and attributes of God; the relation of man to God; the law said to be written in man's heart;* the truth of Scripture; the natural state of man, a state of sin, that is transgression of God's law; the nature and extent of human responsibility; the existence of man in a future state; a judgment after death. These things, I say, you have received with child-like simplicity and docility upon the declarations of others. But now you are investigating the foundations of all belief; your mind has been turned to the appreciation of evidence: it will be therefore but a continuation of the same course of thought to inquire into the stability of your religion. When you shall have acknowledged such stability, you will have obtained a new illustration of principles which you have already been contemplating. Moreover the mat-

* Rom. ii. 15. See the Preface. Dugald Stewart speaks of the reverence due to "morality as *the divine law*, and to those essential principles of the human frame, which bear the manifest signature of the divine workmanship." Persius writes:

> Compositum jus fasque animo, sanctosque recessus
> Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto.

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ters proposed to you are of highest importance, and therefore worthy of most profound consideration. If you are convinced that what is alleged in regard to religion is true, your estimate of what is good and evil, and of the means proper to attain your ends, may and probably will be considerably modified; and thus again your religious meditations will aid you in the voyage on which you have embarked. But further, when you are convinced of the solidity of that basis on which rests your religious faith, fresh light (trust, we pray you, for a short time to mere authority) will probably burst upon your mind; and your difficulties in regard to other moral truths may be lessened or vanish."

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CHAPTER VII.

RECOGNITION OF CERTAIN TRUTHS OF NATURAL RELIGION.

So that our inquirer is now again reduced to a pause. He has been drawn aside, in what he may perhaps think the way of digression, to the consideration of questions, which in his outset he did not contemplate. The deep interest however of what is proposed, its natural connexion with his previous train of thought, and the hope of obtaining further knowledge in regard to matters which have already perplexed his mind, may probably move him to fresh meditation.

"If the things alleged by teachers of religion, he may argue, are true, how certain it is that they are of immense importance not only to the world in general, but also personally and particularly to myself. While on the one hand religion holds out high privileges and advantages, and shews God as a friend and protector, on the other hand it denounces threatenings, and warns me against the attempts of a treacherous, invisible, and powerful adversary. What then

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are the evidences of religion? If it was in any way questionable to a man, whether he had or had not been appointed heir to an estate; or if he had ground for apprehension lest some grievous temporal calamity should befal him, some enemy oppress him; in either of these cases would he not make inquiry, if able so to do, in order that he might take measures for attainment or protection? In choosing the good, therefore, and rejecting the evil, I may not be content with the narrow range to which my thoughts have hitherto been confined: but it behoves me to consider the inferences which arise from the contemplation of my position with regard to God, no less than my relation to man: I must take into account the things of eternity as well as those of time."

It is not necessary for our present purpose, to follow the inquirer into the details of evidence, which he now proceeds to investigate. Let us suppose that the proper books, Paley's Natural Theology, and others, are put into his hands. We may conceive him then, after some time and much scrutiny, to arrive at the certainty that God *is*; that He is moreover such as He is represented to be, a Being of perfect truth, justice, wisdom, benevolence; that He is almighty and knows all things; that He created and still

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preserves, sustains, and governs the world; that again, man, having within him a natural approbation and love of truth, justice, benevolence, recognizes some things as essentially right and of good-desert, rejects others as wrong and of ill-desert, and hereby shews the law of God written in his heart. Let the inquirer (I say) admit these things. An important investigation however still remains: the truth of Scripture is to be considered; and it may be well that as a preliminary he should again consider the weight of highly probable evidence. He now approaches this question in a state of mind better prepared than formerly, inasmuch as he appreciates things of which his ideas were once but indistinct, and is fully convinced of truths of which we shall presently see the bearing upon the matter in hand.

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CHAPTER VIII.

OF MORAL CERTAINTIES.

"SINCE the Creator (he may argue) has in various ways shewn His intentions with respect to the manner in which He designs His creatures to direct their conduct, is it not clear that He has intended us to assume highly probable evidence, as the index of truth, in matters of temporal interest wherein we are concerned to act? For having so placed and connected men together, as we see them placed and connected, He of course knew that the effect would be to compel them to this assumption. Since He has acted therefore in such a manner as to force us to admit highly probable evidence, we may infer that He intended the admission. But a notice conveyed by inference is sufficient for reasonable beings who have the power of drawing inferences. The intimation then of God's intention thus conveyed, is it not in effect a command to His creatures, a law? For what is our idea of a command or law, but that of the intention of the superior, duly notified to the subject?

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"Accordingly, when I receive the testimony of credible witnesses, or allow the certainty of facts supported by a sufficiently strong chain of circumstantial evidence, and so act, I certainly fulfil God's law.

"Now is it not altogether agreeable to the attributes of the Deity, that a law which He has established for the guidance of men should be adequate for such guidance? Are not His laws in general sufficient for their purposes, if we duly avail ourselves of their efficacy? And is there not in truth great weight in the consideration, that those who have had better opportunities of observation than myself, unanimously declare that what naturally would be the case with respect to this law of highly probable evidence, in reality is so? And that experience constantly evinces the sure results obtained in the daily business of life?

"On the whole, then, am I not thus led more fully to appreciate the nature and character of what is called a Moral Certainty, so termed doubtless as connected with considerations of man's moral conduct. This certainty does indeed depend upon highly probable evidence: but then such evidence is supported by principles of religion, and strengthened by observation of results."

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The mind of our inquirer therefore is now subdued and chastened. His considerations are, undoubtedly, susceptible of various illustrations. Let us endeavour to illustrate them.

Say then (if you please) that highly probable evidence is presented, of certain truths, which however do not in the least concern our moral conduct; with regard, for instance, to some object of antiquarian or historical research. Say that such evidence is adduced with respect to the place whence the builders of Stonehenge brought their huge stones, and the means by which they were able in remote and probably rude ages to move them; or with reference to the much canvassed question of the letters of Junius. Say again that equally probable evidence is adduced in regard to some fact, which, if it be true, seriously affects a man's moral conduct; *i.e.* if it be true, it is proper for him to pursue one course, if not true, another; and that too (it may be) in affairs of very great importance. Then in either of the first cases we have simply to consider the intrinsic weight of the evidence. The matter is one of curious speculation, but whether the things asserted be true or not, is of comparatively little moment. They cannot be said to have any important connexion with the attributes of God, or the questions of man's con-

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duct and responsibility. In these cases, then, it may be rash to say that we have obtained truth; though perfectly right to assert our possession of high probability. But in the last case, the intrinsic power of the evidence is strengthened by considerations of the Divine character, and the relation of God to man. Here then we are led to speak of a moral certainty. This is the position of jurymen, who may perhaps safely declare that they have arrived at a moral certainty: as did the jury who convicted the criminal at Norwich. Indeed, after his execution the evidence of guilt was confirmed. For the blunderbuss, with which he perpetrated the murders, was discovered secreted in his premises, while the ramrod fitting the instrument was found in the house of his victims.

Objections and answers to them may sometimes tend to illustration. Suppose it objected: "In adopting your principles with regard to moral certainty, you have assumed various things as true, viz. the existence and alleged character of God, and the facts by which you seek to establish certain relations between God and man: whereas these very allegations claim recognition upon the strength of an accumulation of evidence of great variety in cogency and power, and at all events very different in character from

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the brief and undeniable demonstrations of mathematicians. In appealing therefore to the elementary doctrines of religion to establish what you term moral certainties, you are in fact appealing to things which you also characterize as moral certainties; and thus indeed assume your principles in order to prove your principles." In answer to this, it may be said: "It is admitted that the great primary truths of religion having reference to men's moral conduct, are therefore properly called moral certainties: also, though they can be proved so as to cause conviction in the human mind, such conviction may be produced, strengthened, ripened by an accumulation of evidences of various degrees in power; and therefore the manner of proof is doubtless different from that of mathematical deduction. Yet by what man sees every day of human life and behaviour, he is prepared to expect evidence, thus differing from mathematical proof, in matters involving conduct. Our arguments however are addressed to those whose minds are of such a character as to admit not only mathematical truth, but also certain first grand principles of human conduct; which appeal indeed for reception to some minds with much greater urgency than to others, to some with the accumulated power of many years'

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experience and observation, to others with comparatively small force and efficacy. Minds, however, which fully acknowledge primary convictions of moral truth, may feel difficulties in raising a superstructure, and admitting as true what is established by inferior, though really *sufficient* evidence: and it is with a hope of removing, or at all events lessening such difficulties, that these pages are written: it is with a view of inducing those who cling to the love of mathematical demonstration, and yet cannot but recognize great elements of moral truth, to extend their views. If they will but seriously consider how far it may be proper for them, as rational beings, to enlarge the sphere which has hitherto bounded their acceptance of truth, they may perhaps be led to give their full assent to propositions, which, though heretofore they have been accustomed to consider probable, they have still not esteemed certain.

But to return. "If there be (the inquirer may proceed) an eternal state intended for man, would it not be agreeable to God's character, that the same law of judging upon highly probable evidence should be established with regard to matters of highest, *i.e.* eternal interest? In temporal affairs we see various degrees of interest: this principle however of judgment is

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applicable to all. If it were extended, so as to have reference to the things that are eternal, still there would be merely a continuation of the same rule; there would be exhibited but a uniformity in the character of the Lawgiver.

"Is not the law then so extended? And may we not believe that God having appointed this law, would (according to His usual dealings with men in matters of minor consequence) take care that it led to truth in an affair of such surpassing importance? That He would not, in fact, allow His creatures thereby to be trifled with and mocked? May we not therefore reasonably trust, that experience will ultimately shew its sufficiency, and verify the conclusions which we may obtain in regard to a future state?"

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CHAPTER IX.

A FUTURE JUDGMENT. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

Our inquirer therefore, being now as it were armed with certain weapons and instruments for further investigation; appreciating and confiding in their efficacy; knowing how to use them; and from what he has already obtained, stimulated to renewed exertion; he is aided (say) by the encouragement and assistance of friends, and by the published productions of the learned:

"God (he may argue) has manifestly given various laws to men; and has indicated His intention with sufficient clearness and precision, that those laws should be obeyed. But what are likely to be the consequences of obedience or disobedience? How far is this alleged doctrine of human responsibility true? Where is man held answerable, if answerable? In this world, or in a future state, if there be such a state, or in both?"

With reference then to these ideas of a future

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existence and of retribution, we may conceive him first to look only to the evidence afforded independently of revelation. Such evidence, though it shews a prospect not clear and bright, does still exhibit one not altogether obscure.

"The sense of justice (he may say) is a principle deeply implanted in the human heart. Intimately connected with this are the notions of good-desert and ill-desert. Moreover experience shews that what may be called moral retributions do very frequently take place in this world: such in fact is, in numberless instances, a part of the course and constitution of nature, *i. e.* of the general economy and government of the dispensation under which we live.* From such cases may we not be allowed to infer, that they at all events shew a *tendency*† to what our sense of good-desert and ill-desert leads us to expect, viz. the administra-

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* The heathen poet saw this:

Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede Pœna claudo.—Hor. Od. III. 2. 31.

† From the constitution and circumstances of men, Butler shews the natural tendency of virtue or vice to produce happiness or misery in the present world. To this the obstacles are but accidental. Observation of results confirms his argument. These things mark the character of the Divine government; they are "a declaration of the Author of nature for virtue and against vice" "over and above the moral nature which He has given us."

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tion of final retribution? Doubtless there are cases where we are not able to perceive any such tendency, where vice is apparently prosperous and triumphant, virtue dejected and despised. Be it remembered however, that we do not yet know the whole issues and consequences of things. But admit that on the one hand this success and triumph, on the other this dejection and depression, continue to the end of life: have we not hence an argument strengthening the expectation of a future state; because our notions of good-desert and ill-desert being what they are, and being encouraged by what we observe of the tendencies of things, we are induced to inquire whether what is imperfect will not at length probably be consummated? Since it is not consummated in the present state (in which in fact how many things are similarly imperfect and immature!) will it not be consummated in a future life? *i.e.* will not justice at length be done in another world? That is, will there not be a future state, and a final retribution therein?"

Our inquirer may illustrate this argument for a future state, arising from a consideration of the tendencies of things, as Dugald Stewart has done, by a most remarkable quotation from Dr. Ferguson. "If the human fœtus (he says) were

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qualified to reason of his prospects in the womb of his parent, as he afterwards may do in his range on this terrestrial globe, he might no doubt apprehend in the breach of his umbilical, and in his separation from the womb, a total extinction of life: for how could he conceive it to continue, after his only supply of nourishment from the vital stock of his parent had ceased? He might indeed observe many parts of his organization and frame, which should seem to have no relation to his state in the womb. For what purpose, he might say, this duct which leads from the mouth to the intestines? Why these bones that each apart becomes hard and stiff, while they are separated from one another by so many flexures or joints? Why these jaws in particular, made to move upon hinges, and these germs of teeth, which are pushing to be felt above the surface of the gums? Why the stomach, through which nothing is made to pass? And these spungy lungs, so well fitted to drink up the fluids, but into which the blood, that passes every where else, is scarcely permitted to enter?

"To these queries, which the fœtus was neither qualified to make nor to answer, we are now well apprised the proper answer would be: The life which you now enjoy is but temporary; and these particulars, which now seem to you so pre-

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posterous, are a provision which nature has made for a future course of life which you have to run, and in which their use and propriety will appear sufficiently evident.

"Such are the prognostics of a future destination that might be collected from the state of the fœtus; and similar prognostics of a destination still future may be collected from present appearances in the life and condition of man."

Again, are not all the affairs of life necessarily carried on in such a manner that there is a constant responsibility of man to man, of the inferior to the superior? Have not even those who are now superior and exercise authority, been at some time, at least in their childhood, inferior, subject to authority, answerable? Does not then this perpetual training and discipline of the mind in a system of authority and responsibility, (a discipline and training ordained by God who imposed the necessity,) naturally tend to fit and prepare us for the notion of rendering account to God himself; to whom such responsibility seems peculiarly proper as our Creator, Preserver, Lawgiver? Especially if He is our Lawgiver, is it not likely that there is a responsibility by which His laws may be vindicated? Is not this likelihood established both by the reason of the thing and by the analogy of human laws?

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But further, are not these ideas strengthened by reflecting upon what were manifestly the common sense and feeling of men previously to the delivery of this alleged revelation? Do we not learn from ancient writers, to whom the very name of Christ was unknown, that an expectation was current of a future judgment? Though on such anticipations were built all sorts of absurdities as to the manner and details of things, still the existence of the original principle is surely of weight, as shewing the general bias of the human mind, and evincing, it may be, the presages of natural conscience.*

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* Other arguments for a future state, derived from the light of nature, are collected by Stewart. The natural sentiment of remorse, following guilt, has often been urged.

Stewart supposes a murder perpetrated without any human witness, and without any circumstance which could lead to detection. Experience (he says) shews us that remorse has been sufficient to poison all the enjoyments which luxury could offer to the murderer, and even to render life itself insupportable. The blood he has spilt has seemed to call aloud to heaven for vengeance; and he has conceived his punishment in a future state to be the more certain, because he has made no atonement while here to the society he has injured. Accordingly, many years after the perpetration of his crime, a murderer has been frequently known to feel his existence so intolerable a burden, that he has voluntarily revealed his own guilt, and delivered himself up to an ignominious death.

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The inquirer then, earnestly desiring whatsoever light has been afforded to mankind upon subjects of such high importance, and knowing that Scripture professes authoritatively to assert the doctrine of future retribution, may now probably be induced studiously to weigh the evidences of Christianity.

While on the one hand, his mind hungers and thirsts for truth; on the other hand, the authority of Scripture is presented to him with no ordinary *primâ facie* claims for consideration, examination, recognition.

For consider the attention due from every man, not merely from ardent investigators of knowledge, to such an alleged revelation. Suppose it declared with any show of probability, or

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We remember the description of Orestes after the murder of his mother:

Μεν. Τίς σ' απόλλυσιν νόσος;
Ορ. Ἡ ξύνεσις ὅτι σύνοιδα δείν' ειργασμένος.
EURIP. *Orest.*

So we have Shakspeare's delineations in Macbeth and Hamlet:

.....Diri conscia facti
Mens habet attonitos, et surdo verbere cædit,
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum.
Pœna autem vehemens.....
Nocte dieque suum gestare in pectore testem.—JUV. XIII.

We find here at least evidences of God's moral government over the world.

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even possibility, that in addition to the law of nature, God has also given a written exposition of His will; written information too of truths concerning human conduct, which it was impossible for men, otherwise than by revelation, to know: it is quite clear, that if we regard only fitness of behaviour, man is not at liberty arbitrarily to determine, whether he will neglect or consider the intimations which he has received. If God, acknowledged to be the Creator, Preserver, Lawgiver, speaks, it behoves man, the subject, reverentially to attend. If it be doubtful whether God has or has not spoken, much more if probable that He has, it is the duty of man humbly and diligently to inquire. Take the analogy of a person acting under a superior in the common affairs of human life. Suppose a general commanding an army, receives what is said to be a notice from the government under which he acts: suppose, however, that he is in doubt respecting the genuineness of such notice, and that means of inquiry are open: is it not his duty to inquire? But assuredly it is alleged with at least some appearance of probability, nay more, with much authority and power, that Scripture really and truly is what it is said to be, viz. an authoritative notice from God to man. It is recognized by the common consent of the

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wise and learned; acknowledged by the legislatures of various countries throughout the world, so that churches are built and ministers appointed to inculcate and explain its doctrines; in this country especially, our neighbours, acquaintance, and friends profess Christianity; and we ourselves probably have been trained to the observance of its precepts, and have witnessed our parents' acknowledgment of its truth. Scripture therefore is *prima facie* proposed to Englishmen, with no small pretensions and claims. Accordingly, if they are yet unconvinced, it behoves them, as we have seen, to inquire: for thus strongly recommended, it is said to convey the authoritative intimation of God their superior.

In the course of such an investigation, then, what sort of evidence is to be expected? What will suffice as a justification of that concurrence of the wise and learned, of the recognition of legislatures, of the example of multitudes of believers? We are unable to perceive any reasons why the usual rules of the divine economy should be violated in this more than in other instances. Those rules then would altogether be observed by a production of highly probable evidence, which, as we have before seen, is able to establish a moral certainty. It is, I conceive, indisputable that an accumulation of such evidence may be

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adduced, of the greatest variety and cogency, of such a character as would be more than sufficient to convince an impartial jury on a trial for life or death. For let any man of a fair and honest mind study Scripture itself, with a view to the appreciation of its internal evidence; and let him derive external proof from a perusal of the works of learned authors, and among these especially of Paley's Evidences.

Thus then it will, I think, appear that in a matter of such immense importance, God has not dealt out any niggard allowance of proof. We have seen how strong are the reasons which should move men to inquire into the evidences of Christianity. Upon such investigation to admit its claims, may be deemed an act of proper obedience to the law of highly probable evidence. After this admission, the mind derives additional confirmation from a reflection already mentioned, which strengthens all moral evidence, more especially then the proofs of Christianity, affecting men's conduct in the highest degree, and involving interests of inexpressible magnitude. The reflection is this: It is difficult to conceive that God, our Creator, Preserver, Lawgiver, Judge, a God of truth, having given such evidence for our guidance, would allow His creatures, subjects, and dependent beings thereby to be deceived.

THE END OF BOOK I.

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BOOK II.

CONSIDERATIONS UPON MORAL EVIDENCE, IMMEDIATELY SUBSEQUENT TO THE RECOGNITION OF CHRISTIANITY.

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CHAPTER I.

STATE OF MIND OF THE INQUIRER. NATURE AND EXTENT OF RESPONSIBILITY.

CONTRAST now the position of our inquirer with that represented at the commencement of this treatise. Disheartened and checked by experiencing the painful effects of unchastised emotions, he had then begun to recognize his powers as a rational being, and with eager vehemence to inquire, "who will shew us any good?" But his investigations have now led him to a recognition of the great principles of natural and revealed religion; and he perceives that he must give his deliberate assent to a variety of propositions, which though he had formerly received, he had still not examined. In regard to truths asserted in Holy Writ, he finds that while some of them, independently of Scripture, might have been scarcely conceivable, and are yet credible; others, antecedently to revelation, might appear possible or probable.

Accordingly, as on the one hand, the divine records contain an authoritative republication of

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the law of nature ;* so, on the other hand, we may therein find an answer to our earnest inquiries respecting the certainty of responsibility, the eternal existence of man in a future state, and a judgment after death. These things are explicitly declared. Not only is man a subject and a servant, intended according to the intimations of his own conscience to act in a particular manner; but also (agreeably to the principles by which even human governments vindicate their laws, human masters demand account from their subjects) responsible. Some consequences indeed immediately follow some actions, and accordingly men do certain things and avoid others, naturally it may be said, and as it were instinctively: and therefore even herein is implied a natural government, and immediate responsibility. And as we have seen, moral retributions (not on the instant, perhaps, but after some time) do occur even in this life. Yet will the final consummation and arrangement of all things be effected in a future state, when shall be given unto every man according to his works.

While the inquirer then has gained these conclusions of inestimable value, the steps by which

* Butler's Analogy, Part II. Chap. V.

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he has obtained them, and the discipline implied in his progress, will have prepared his mind to carry on its thoughts to matters of high importance, which still await them. His enthusiastic temperament may probably induce him zealously to direct his meditations to the subject of religion; and the connexion between that subject and his previous train of reflection will continually receive fresh illustration.

Accordingly, "Being responsible, he may argue, it behoves me fully to understand the nature and extent of my responsibility. Not only then would our ordinary notions of things, and the system of discipline under which we live, a system ordained by God, impress upon our minds correct ideas upon the subject of responsibility: not only would our observation of the proceedings of inferiors, who in temporal matters render account to their superiors, tend to prove that we are answerable for the due use or abuse of things or powers entrusted to our care and management: but Scripture also expressly recognizes this principle in regard to the nature of man's responsibility to God, in the parable of the Talents.* The whole tendency too and scope of Scripture shew, that everything I possess, my powers both

* Matt. xxv. 14.

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of body and mind, my wealth, time, and opportunities are but entrusted to me to be used to the honour of the Almighty. Thus St. Paul tells us, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'* Again, our Saviour Himself declares, 'Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.'†

"Is it not altogether reasonable that the Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, should require such service from those whom He has created, preserved, and redeemed? If we owe Him the service of one day, do we not owe Him that of all? If it be acknowledged that men are to serve Him in matters of great consequence, where shall a line be drawn, and how shall it be said that some affairs are so trifling, that there is no need to think of the Deity as therein concerned? In the material world, is not His superintending care displayed in regard to the smallest insect or plant? Why then should He not be equally watchful in the moral? What can be deemed unimportant if connected with our relation to Him? At all events, our time being a valuable talent, the manner of its application must involve a question worthy of consideration.

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* 1 Cor. x. 31. † Matt. xii. 36.

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"But suppose it argued that it is impossible to accomplish the daily business of life, if we thus constantly devote our minds to God: I at least have heard it said that there is a habit of thought (to be acquired as all other habits are, by frequent repetition of acts) whereby we may easily refer all our ordinary proceedings to the honour of God, so that a devout reflection may continually pass through the mind, as thus: 'Now am I endeavouring to fulfil the purposes of my existence, to carry out the intentions of my God and Saviour.' Such a habit need not be any hinderance to the dispatch of business; for the mind being thus trained, would as it were instinctively admit the pious sentiment: just as (to borrow the analogy of Jeremy Taylor) a man using a knife for the accomplishment of any object, entertains a continual care lest he cut his hand; nevertheless, this care does not at all retard the progress of the business in which he is engaged.

"But in how many salutary ways will such a habit of pious reflection operate! How will it tend to chastise or expel all vain and corrupt imaginations! How will it hallow all business! Is not this what is especially contemplated in the expression of 'God being in all a man's thoughts?'"

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"My determination then is, humbly to present myself, both body and soul, a living sacrifice unto God, which is my reasonable service."*

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* Rom. xii. 1.

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CHAPTER II.

GREAT RESPONSIBILITY IN REGARD TO THE DUE ADMISSION OF HIGHLY PROBABLE EVIDENCE.

But if our inquirer is thus intent upon obeying the laws of God, his thoughts may naturally be recalled to that law of highly probable evidence which has already engrossed so much time and consideration. The subject however is not yet exhausted, and its importance is manifest. Let us then direct our attention to this matter, availing ourselves of such additional light as we may be able to obtain at the new point of view to which we have ascended.

The doctrine that human responsibility has reference to all the laws of God, may of course be applied to the law of highly probable evidence. Not only is it necessary and right that man should obey this law, and admit the truths thus presented to him as moral certainties; but also for not receiving them he is plainly answerable.

Moreover, the degree of responsibility is mani-

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festly very great. For a just estimate of moral truth lying at the foundation of all right conduct must therefore be of incalculable value. Accordingly we are highly accountable for the proper exercise of the highest power committed to our trust, viz. the judicial faculty of appreciating that which discloses truth.

On the whole, man being the responsible servant of God, and a master naturally giving notice to his servant of things intended to be done; highly probable evidence may, in matter respecting human conduct, be rightly considered as a definite and obligatory notice of God to man. The question arises in any particular case, Is the evidence of the customary character? Does it bear that stamp of probability which marks its sufficiency according to the ordinary course of human affairs and the common sense of men? Is it the testimony of one or more witnesses? Are they then credible? Are the facts testified conceivable or possible? Or does the proof depend upon a combination of circumstances, which together support the conclusion with clearness and certainty?* Then in a question involving his

* It has been sometimes asked, In cases involving conduct, what is the least amount of evidence which will shew that a thing has been, is, will be? In reply to which, it seems difficult if not impossible to fix any general rule or measure.

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conduct as a responsible agent, man may not look upon such unassailable statements of witnesses, or combined effect of circumstances, as dependent upon a blind chance: he may not consider that his reception or non-reception of the evidence is exempt from the surveillance of his Superior: but must assume the truth of the facts presented to him, and proceed to action on his responsibility.

To illustrate this by the proceedings of our courts of justice. A subpœna, it may be, is served upon a witness. It is the notice of the court. Receiving protection from the laws, and subject to their authority, it behoves him to pay due attention to those who are legally empowered to summon him. The document (suppose) is drawn up in the proper form and presented in the customary manner. He may not cavil, as if the tie was insufficient to oblige him. He is answerable. The conclusions at which we have arrived,

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Nevertheless, on particular occasions a man must judge as responsible. Where the difficulties arising from a conflict of evidence are not sufficient to justify the withholding a decision, it is clear that we have no alternative but to admit those arguments, which we honestly believe to be the more weighty, however slight may be the preponderance. In such cases as these where the matter is of importance, there is frequently a great moral trial, and a call for prayer to God and trust in Him.

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tend to illustrate and may themselves be illustrated by various passages of Scripture. We find Abraham highly commended, because "being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief."* Again: "By faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son; of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure."† On these occasions Abraham was plainly compelled to judge between conflicting evidence, (see above p. 22). He was not misled by the delusions of an excited imagination; but must have had sufficient proofs that he had really received communications from God. In the former case, this proof, whatever it might have been, was able to overpower the evidence derived from a consideration of the ordinary course of nature and the laws of human birth. On the latter occasion it was so strong as to overcome not only the feeling of parental affection, but also the clear evidence

* Rom. iv. 19. † Heb. xi. 17.

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which convinces a reasonable mind that it is unlawful for a man to kill his son. In the book of Exodus we have a lively representation of conflicting emotions in the mind of Moses, as he sees the burning though unconsumed bush, and hears the voice thence issuing. He thinks of his own weakness: "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?" God condescends to explain the details of things; and gives promises of support. Moses however shrinks. New miracles are worked to convince him. He is still reluctant. "Oh my Lord, I am not eloquent; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." He hears in reply, "Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Now therefore go; and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Moses nevertheless is yet unwilling. He declines to receive the notice of his Superior. Accordingly "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses." So again unbelief is laid as a sin to the charge of those who refused to admit the claims of Christ. The evidence presented to them was of such a character that it ought to have convinced their minds. Unbelief in revealed religion is not merely a sin because it is declared so to be in Holy Writ, (otherwise the unbeliever

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might allege that rejecting Scripture, he rejected all its denunciations): but it is essentially and intrinsically a sin, as implying a contempt of a primary and fundamental law given by God to man, that is to say, the law of highly probable evidence.

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CHAPTER III.

MAN IS EVER A RESPONSIBLE JUDGE, ACTING BY AUTHORITY. IN MATTERS INVOLVING GREAT INTERESTS, THE RESPONSIBILITY IS MORE STRONGLY FELT.

In the earlier part of this treatise our attention was engrossed by the contemplation of the human mind judging upon evidence. We now see that we are also to judge by authority. Our notion of the authority is this. It is plain that in placing man in the world God intended, not that he should drag on an unprofitable existence in mere idleness: not that he should devote his powers to the attainment of sensible objects considered abstractedly, and valued solely for their own sake; but that in everything his ultimate aim should be the glory of the Creator. To carry out such a purpose then, it is necessary that man should seek for truth: and to shew him this truth evidence is an appointed instrument. Being obliged therefore to act, he is compelled to judge, as a preliminary to such action: and therefore he

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has in effect a command, much more an authority to judge. If too every thing that he has is but entrusted to him as accountable, and if in his whole conduct he perpetually acknowledges this principle, then is he ever a responsible judge acting by authority.

It may serve for illustration, if we contrast these maxims with the notions of persons, who seem to think that it is proper for them on all occasions, not only to form, but also to deliver judgments. Hence are promulgated unsound and flippant opinions, without authority or evidence, sometimes in opposition to both, upon matters of the greatest consequence. Against this kind of rashness doubtless are directed the texts of Scripture, "Judge not, that ye be not judged";* "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth";† "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God: let us not therefore judge one another any more."‡ But the truly modest and humble servant of God fears even to judge privately in his own breast, unless upon a principle and with an object which he could exhibit even in the presence of his great Creator. If he does judge, he knows that his faculties are but

* Matt. vii. 1. † Rom. xiv. 4. ‡ Rom. xiv. 12, 13.

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limited, and his evidence probable. And before he expresses his sentiments to men, he is well assured that it becomes him so to do.

In matters involving great interests, there is a high degree of solemnity with which our hearts are filled. Our thoughts are more deeply fixed upon principles of religion. If we have to act, we are naturally most earnest and diligent in endeavouring duly to appreciate the evidence presented to our minds. We are scrupulous in estimating our moral position and responsibility. Accordingly our humble appeal to the God of truth, to lead us to the attainment of that truth of which we crave the possession, tends to beget a confidence, that our proper, our only means of discovery, the due use of probable evidence, will direct us rightly. Otherwise might not the dispensation under which we live seem harsh? Whereas, in the first place, our primary notions of the character and attributes of the Creator shew *a priori* that He would not place His creatures under such a dispensation: and secondly, experience proves (*i.e.* experience of the things we do know, and are able, with certain limitations, to trace from their origin to their consequences) that He has not so placed us.

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CHAPTER IV.

RECAPITULATION OF ELEMENTS COMBINED IN THE CHARACTER OF A JUDGE. CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS.

We may now at a glance review the features combined in our notion of one who judges. Evidence he must have, for it is this which, as we have seen, is to shew him truth. Moreover if his moral conduct is involved, being compelled to act, he is compelled to judge. Hence he derives his authority. He is likewise impressed with a due sense of responsibility. Where the matter is of importance this sense is more keenly felt.* It is clear therefore that great respect is due to the decision of such a judge, and will assuredly be paid.

We may now then, in the way of illustration, revert to matters which have heretofore per-

* It has been recorded of an eminent judge of the early part of this century, that it was his habit to spend a considerable portion of the night preceding any trial for life or death, at which he was to preside, in earnest and anxious prayer.

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plexed the mind of our inquirer, viz. the proceedings of courts of justice. Juries are to judge upon evidence and by authority. They are bound by a solemn and stringent responsibility. They act under the sanction of an oath. Great interests are at stake. These things then, as men, they cannot but (more or less sensibly) feel. Accordingly, though jurymen, as all other men, sometimes err, and though the regulation that twelve persons must be unanimous in their judgment is at least a strange one, the verdict nevertheless of a jury is of consideration and weight.

In regard to such a trial as that which took place at Norwich, we may fully believe the accused was convicted agreeably to the laws given by God to man. What could exceed the patient attention both of the judge and of the jury? How strong was the chain of evidence! If God's laws be generally just, then assuredly they can be justified in each particular case.*

But with reference to the objection, that in England many innocent persons have been hanged: the truth of such an assertion, even if proved, would not in any way invalidate our reasonings. We know that juries are but fallible men: and in this world nothing is perfect.

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* See above, pp. 31, 32.

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Though principles however be not always duly carried out, the principles still remain.

Let it be granted, however, that though maxims be generally true, they may yet admit modifications and restrictions. Accordingly, if it be possible to conceive that in some particular case, involving, if you please, temporal interests of great magnitude, we strictly obey the law given for the investigation of truth, and yet do not obtain the object of our search, still we are not justified in complaining. It is our duty to recollect that we are not yet acquainted with the whole issues and events of things. We cannot absolutely assume that what seems harsh is so in reality.

For example: take the case before adduced, that of a jury trying a man for murder. Say that the evidence presented is so strong as really to justify a verdict of 'guilty.' Yet admit the supposition, so improbable that it is only for the sake of argument we propose to entertain it, nevertheless admit that the man is innocent. He is condemned and executed. Here is apparently a hardship. No one is in fault. Men have done all that they can do. Still a fellow-creature dies under the charge of an offence which he never committed. In respect however to this strange combination of circumstances, let

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us take heed to our judgments. We are not yet in possession of the full knowledge of the matter. Its bearings and relations may perhaps be developed in a future state. It is, of course, an exception to a general rule. We, who do not know all the reasons of things, cannot pretend to say, that there are not good grounds for such exception. If the jury have done their duty, let them be satisfied therewith. In regard to the man's death, no more has happened to him than if he had been bitten by a mad dog, or had fallen down a precipice: exceptions certainly to the general modes of death assigned to mankind, but still not so involving the character and attributes of the Creator, as to afford ground of jealousy or suspicion with reference to those attributes: on the contrary, as such misfortunes, however dreadful, have been at times permitted or assigned by Him, this permission or decree can doubtless be justified; though we may not perceive the reasons in any particular case, and may be shocked for want of such perception. Again, if an innocent man is to be punished, let him fortify his mind with regard to the disgrace incurred, by reflecting that this is one of the pains and troubles incident in the dispensation under which we live, and by which we are prepared for a future state. Though he cannot

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control events (which are in reality under a much wiser and higher superintendance), he has nevertheless ample occupation for his mind, in endeavouring to accommodate himself to the afflicting circumstances in which he is placed, and in reaping the full benefit of that discipline to which he is subjected.

An illustration of what has been given above may be derived from considerations of the Scriptural doctrine of prayer. Assume this doctrine to be true; *i.e.* that it is the duty of man to pray in obedience to the revealed will of the Deity; that again God has promised to grant the prayers of those who ask in His Son's name. But consider also, if it should happen that, earnestly and devoutly praying in the prescribed manner, we nevertheless do not obtain what we ask, yet must we not herein murmur against God. For He alone knows all the results of things: He may perceive that what we have asked would not be good for us to receive: if we had known this as well as He, we should not have preferred our petition: and He may refuse our request of mere goodness. Nor will His truth hereby suffer any imputation. For from considerations of the relative position of God and man, the former infinite, entirely perfect, and a Protector, the latter limited, imperfect, and dependent, it

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must have been implied in the original promise, that the things asked should be good for man to receive.

In prayer, then, man fulfils a duty. He fulfils a duty in admitting and obeying the law of highly probable evidence. Ordinarily, the results consequent upon such actions of devotion or obedience, present no real difficulty. If however at any time there be some appearance of hardship, we may recollect that both cases are susceptible of a like explanation, arising from considerations of the Divine attributes, and the relation between God and man.

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CHAPTER V.

FURTHER ILLUSTRATIONS OF OUR PRINCIPLES.

HAVING thus considered a possible objection, let us revert to our original principle; *i. e.* in cases involving conduct obedience to the law of highly probable evidence is right, and ordinarily leads to truth.

It may be well to obtain further illustration on the subject.

To this end let us take into consideration the question of confidence between man and man.

I am ill (suppose), and ignorant of the remedies by which my disorder may be removed. I have access to a physician, of whose skill much has been told me by persons, on whom reliance can be placed as competent and honest judges: and I am therefore led to consult this physician. Consider now the position. In the first place, if what has been said above* be true, my judgment is marked with a seal of authority.

* See p. 73.

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In consequence of my need of a physician, I am authorized, nay compelled to judge. When we eat and drink to preserve our lives, we fulfil the intentions of the Creator, and are so said to act to the glory of God,* who is glorified when His purposes are carried out: in like manner, do we not also honour God, when we take means to avail ourselves of medicines, which He has ordained as a remedy for diseases? But again, in regard to the physician, I proceed upon evidence. His reputation proves his skill: not indeed in the manner of mathematical demonstration: still sufficiently. It is my duty therefore to confide in him, to take the medicines he prescribes, to obey the restrictions he imposes. I am justified in my belief, that he knows what is good, as well as what is bad for my complaint. His power over me continues as long as my need of a physician and my confidence in him remain. It is true that this trust, as indeed all trust in man, is of a limited and restricted kind. If he is discovered (a supposition however most improbable), nevertheless if he is discovered in attempting something monstrous, if he tries unjustifiable experiments on my constitution, or exhibits some extraordinary and manifest incapacity

* See p. 64.

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in judgment, my confidence is shaken or destroyed. Say, if you please, generally, that in the progress of our intercourse, stronger evidence is at any time given for the withdrawal of confidence, than has originally been afforded for reposing it: why then, no doubt, I must obey the more weighty and later evidence, as containing a new indication of the intentions of the Lawgiver to whom I am answerable. Nevertheless my former trust has been right, no less than my latter withdrawal. In either case I have acted agreeably to the law to which I am subject, that of receiving highly probable evidence in cases where I am authorized to judge.

In the supposition that has been made above, we have taken into account an exception to a general rule. It is manifest that the pressure of difficulties is removed, if we reflect that the events of things are in the hands of a wise, powerful, just, and benevolent God, who overrules all things for the ultimate good of those who trust in Him.

For further illustration of the question of confidence between man and man, take the case of a comparatively ignorant and illiterate person, brought up (let us suppose) in the doctrines of Christianity. To him probably such a book as Paley's Evidences is wholly unknown; would, if

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known, be extremely difficult if not utterly unintelligible. Nevertheless he has been educated in the religion which is that of his parents and country, and is recognized and approved by all those, for whose characters he entertains respect. He attends probably to the instructions afforded by the minister of his parish, and observes that the things taught are suitable to his own sense of right and wrong, to his natural perceptions of truth, justice, benevolence. He has then a body of evidence; of which the reception of a considerable portion implies his acquiescence in the authority of others. Nevertheless in thus deferring to the conclusions of other men, he in no way surrenders or tampers with his duty of private judgment. His mind is exercised in determining, what sort of confidence (for confidence in man admits innumerable degrees), what amount of respect is due to this authority of others. On the whole, he finds that the combined effect of all his evidence put together, is such as to justify and force a belief that Revelation is true, and that his conduct must be regulated by the precepts therein delivered. Not only is the duty of private judgment incumbent upon him: but in his own case he is a judge of the very highest authority* and responsibility;

* See above p. 73.

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since his conduct as a servant of God must depend upon his judgment, and since no less a question is at stake than that of his welfare, as a being destined for immortality.

It will be but a sequel to the considerations we have been pursuing, if we observe how monstrous is that dogma, by which men have dared without proof to require others to esteem them as infallible. In many relations and circumstances of life, high respect is of course due to the judgments of other men, especially, we may remark, of parents, or of those who are *in loco parentis:* if however evidence be that which is to guide conduct, and we plead authority as our justification in any given case, we are still open to the question, Had we evidence sufficient to warrant us in receiving the authority? If we had, then of course we are justified: if not, the authority is unsatisfactory and valueless. In either case the law of evidence is a principle anterior to and stronger than the respect due to authority; and the duty of private judgment is vindicated and established. Accordingly we find that our Saviour, who really was infallible, appeals to the Jews to recognize the proofs of His authority: "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."* So again, in

* John x. 25.

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a sentence implying that they might naturally require proof: "If I do not the works of my Father believe me not."*

The authority of others is in fact only a portion of that body of evidence, the whole of which is rightly submitted to the judgment. In any case a man, or body of men, of acknowledged skill, if you please, and wisdom, deliver their decision. If I am to act in the matter, I must take their judgment at what it is worth; and uniting it with various other evidence, which may come before me, must make all proper allowances, additions and subtractions. I shall thus be able to determine whether there is on the whole a preponderance of evidence, on the one side or the other, sufficient to constitute an indication of the intentions of the Lawgiver, according to the common course of human affairs. Be the nature of the evidence what it may, either implying the authority of wise and skilful men, or exhibiting the common sense of all men, or at once appealing to my own individual powers and perceptions; if the notice be sufficient, I must admit it, and as a responsible agent, act thereupon.

These principles on the one hand prevent authority from being strained beyond its just

* John x. 37.

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bounds: on the other hand, they operate as a check to the crude notions of those who clamour much about what they scarcely appear to understand, viz. the rights and privileges and duties of private judgment. In their eager assertion of what they consider liberty, they proceed in fact to licentiousness; and seem to forget that he who judges, judges responsibly. "I think so and so (is the cry), you think differently; my decision may be right no less than yours; I am a man, you are a man; the judicial faculty within me is the voice of God; what higher pretensions can you allege?"

To which it may be replied: No doubt the judicial faculty which any one possesses is to him a more binding authority than that of another man. Let this faculty however be rightly directed. If the other man has means of knowing superior to his own, and if the other man's honesty in the development of his knowledge is undoubted, then a man's own judgment is properly employed in estimating such means of knowledge and honesty: being assured on these points it has done its duty. Let him now trust to that authority which he recognizes. It would be absurd in the extreme for me, a private individual (*ἰδιώτης*, as the Greeks say), unskilled in law, to say to a lawyer on a point of law, "I think so and so; you

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think differently. My decision may be right no less than yours. I am a man: you are a man, &c. &c."

A story told by Jeremy Taylor may supply an apt illustration of this subject. "Two brethren travelling together, whereof one was esteemed wise, and the other little better than a fool, came to a place where the way parted. The foolish brother espying one of them to be fair and pleasant, and the other dirty and uneven, would needs go that way, though his wiser brother told him, that in all reason that must needs be the wrong way: but he followed his own eyes, not his brother's reason: and his brother being more kind than wise, though against his reason, followed his foolish brother: they went on till they fell into the hands of thieves, who robbed them and imprisoned them, till they could redeem themselves with a sum of money. These brothers accuse each other before the king, as authors of each other's evil. The wiser complained that his brother would not obey him, though he was known to be wiser, and spoke reason. The other complained of him for following him that was a fool, affirming that he would have returned back, if he had seen his wiser brother confident, and to have followed his own reason. The king condemned them both:

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the fool because he did not follow the direction of the wise; and the wise because he did follow the wilfulness of the fool. So will God deal with us at the day of judgment in the scrutinies of conscience."*

What has been said may perhaps be strengthened by a quotation from Reid: "In the first part of life we have no other guide than authority; and without a disposition to receive implicitly what we are taught, we should be incapable of instruction and incapable of improvement.

"When judgment is ripe, there are many things of which we are incompetent judges. In such matters it is most reasonable to rely upon the judgment of those whom we believe to be competent and disinterested. The highest court of judicature in the nation relies upon the authority of lawyers and physicians in matters belonging to their respective professions.

"Even in matters which we have access to know, authority always will have, and ought to have more or less weight, in proportion to the evidence on which our own judgment rests, and the opinion we have of the judgment and candour of those who differ from us or agree with us. The modest man conscious of his own

* Jeremy Taylor. Doctor Dub.

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fallibility in judging, is in danger of giving too much to authority; the arrogant of giving too little.

"In all matters belonging to our cognizance, every man must be determined by his own final judgment, otherwise he does not act the part of a rational being. Authority may add weight to one scale; but the man holds the balance, and judges what weight he ought to allow to authority.

"If a man should even clain infallibility, we must judge of his title to that prerogative. If a man pretend to be an ambassador from heaven, we must judge of his credentials. No claim can deprive us of this right, or excuse us for neglecting to exercise it."

It is easily seen that when you have once determined to place confidence in a man, and do so place it, you thereby give him power. Now there is a natural law, capable of the clearest and most indubitable proof, by which man is bound to place confidence in man. The business of human life cannot proceed without this mutual trust. Since however it was intended that we should live together in society, it must have been designed that those things should be established, which are necessary for the maintenance of society. The law too is

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imposed by the authority of the designer, that of God. If therefore, where circumstances require us to repose confidence in our fellow-men, we without just cause refuse that confidence in its proper measure and degree, we certainly transgress the law of the Creator. Moreover (as has been remarked by a great moralist) a suspicious man becomes himself naturally an object of suspicion to others. For they are inclined to argue, that his principles of distrust are not merely drawn from his experience of the conduct of other men, but also from what he knows to be his own disposition and character. On the whole then, men of liberal and ingenuous minds are not only disposed to place confidence in others; not only do their own generous and benevolent sentiments naturally lead them so to do; but they are also sensible that trust in man is a duty we owe to God; and they shrink from the imputations or suspicions attached to the character of the suspicious. These men then do sometimes become a mark to the designing. Such persons wanting power* cry out for confidence.

* Sometimes perhaps the motive may be inconsiderate vanity, or immodest curiosity. At other times a proper motive. That however which we are more especially considering is the position of the person subjected to these demands.

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For as all men must trust their neighbours, so must every one be convinced that his neighbour, in some manner or other, in some degree or other, has power over him, and he over his neighbour. There may be infinite varieties and degrees of power, just as of confidence. These designing persons then do not perhaps at once boldly ask for power; but if they gain higher confidence, they virtually and in effect obtain greater power. A just estimate however of the principles on which, and the limitations with which confidence ought to be reposed, may enable us to escape from difficulties wherein we may otherwise be entangled from want of due discipline, and proper regulation of things in themselves estimable and good.

Now in God (as our religion teaches us) we may trust with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. Not only are we allowed but required so to trust. He demands this confidence, of which His divine perfections shew Him worthy. But man, even if untainted by sin, if ever fulfilling the law of his being, would still be infinitely inferior to his great Creator. Observe especially his inferiority in power, wisdom, knowledge. In man therefore, even if he was in his best state, such a limited confidence only could with propriety be placed, as should be suitable to a being

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thus limited in capacities and powers. But recollect that man (as Scripture shews) far from being in his best state, is in one of degradation. Those who are called good, are not so absolutely, *i.e.* do not fulfil God's law; but are only relatively and imperfectly good. As the number of men is countless, so the varieties of their character from the highest or best to the lowest or worst, are also countless. Again, the powers of men are as different as their dispositions. As no *man* therefore is worthy of unlimited confidence,* yet since it is our duty to trust our fellow-creatures, and man's worthiness is of such infinite shades and varieties, as too the occasions requiring trust are of such endless diversity; it follows that the degrees of our confidence, and the limitations with which we ought to accord it, are also innumerable. A general rule, sufficiently comprehensive, can scarcely be laid down upon the subject. Each particular case, as it occurs, may be determined on its own merits.

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* To give this unbounded confidence to man is indeed a species of idolatry: for we thus take away from God that which belongs to Him, and of which He alone is worthy, and we give it to a creature, to whom it does not belong, and who is unworthy of it. Thus we "worship and serve the creature more than the Creator," which is evidently the spirit of idolatry.

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Be it remembered however, that since our moral conduct is herein concerned, we are responsible for our judgment, in regard to the degree of confidence, and the restrictions or limitations to be imposed, to God our judge. In the first place, do the circumstances in which we are placed require this confidence to be reposed? Secondly, is the man worthy, or at all events not plainly unworthy? Thirdly, what surveillance or restrictions is it proper to impose? These are questions to be determined upon evidence, highly probable evidence, such as has been before described: if they are resolved without or in opposition to such evidence, they are resolved without or in opposition to the customary intimations of the Superior to the subject, who is answerable accordingly. Where a man reposes high confidence in one who afterwards betrays it, while the traitor is condemned, he who confided is often pitied, not blamed. Here, as in other cases, the judgment of the world is sometimes given without authority or sufficient evidence. The traitor of course is worthy of condemnation. But the questions also arise—Was he who trusted justified? Did the circumstances of the case require him to repose confidence at all? Was there no evidence at the time which might have shewn the unworthiness of the person

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trusted? None that might have pointed out the propriety of more vigilant and frequent superintendance?

The principle of responsibility in regard to the trust which we place in our fellow-creatures may be thus briefly asserted. When I give my confidence to any one, I thereby invest him with power. But since all power carries with it its responsibility, and I am answerable for the use and application of every faculty I possess, I am therefore answerable for the delegation of power: for to delegate it is to apply it: accordingly I am accountable for the confidence which I place in a fellow-creature; accountable both as regards the occasion, and also the degree of the trust, as well as the limitations with which it is reposed.

As there are some persons in the world whom scarcely any amount of moral proof will convince; so there seem to be men of a too confiding and credulous character, who are ready to believe any thing and every thing, without, or even in opposition to, evidence. The two dispositions appear in fact to coincide with and run into each other: for if I will not believe what I ought, I am naturally led to believe that which I ought not. For instance, the Jews who saw our Saviour's miracles, and heard His appeals,

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though they would not believe Him, believed that it was possible for a person to exhibit such power in attestation of such claims, and yet not be from God. At all events an excessive readiness to believe is a fault, of which the greatness is proportionable to such excess. Say that I am placed in a position to act, and I assume what is not proved by satisfactory evidence, here is clearly a violation of our primary notions of propriety. I practically assert to be true, that which may or may not be so. I cannot now, as before, plead the intimation conveyed by the Lawgiver to the subject: for, by supposition, the evidence is not sufficient to constitute such an intimation. I have not, it may be, distinguished between suspicion and proof. I have therefore virtually made myself answerable, as professing to know what I do not know. But say that I believe and act, not only without but against evidence. Here my conduct is still more reprehensible. For I in effect make myself responsible as knowing that to be true, which there is evidence to teach me is not true. Such considerations bear upon what has recently been the subject of our thoughts, and tend to shew how reprehensible we may sometimes be in placing confidence in men altogether unworthy. We cannot too seri-

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ously reflect, that because the traitor may deserve higher condemnation, *that* is no reason why a high condemnation should not fall upon the betrayed.

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CHAPTER VI.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

In illustrating our notions of the law of highly probable evidence, we have taken particular instances of the confidence which man reposes in his fellow-creatures, and have thence ascended to the consideration of the general principle of trust. But we may proceed still further, and assert that there is a multitude of general principles, stored up in men's minds, to be used as occasion requires, which exemplify the operation of the laws of moral evidence. The necessity of men's condition, even their very weakness, forces them to adopt general rules, by which to direct their conduct.* Accordingly it is assuredly the intention of the Creator, who imposed the neces-

* This wisdom we may learn from the fable: "A fox (it is said) in traversing the forest, observed a boar whetting his tusks against a tree. 'Why make these martial preparations,' cried the fox, 'since there is no enemy near?' 'That may be,' replied the boar, 'but you ought to know that we should scour up our arms while we have leisure. In time of danger we shall have something else to do.'"

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sity that they should do so. Whatever may be the practice of our legislature or courts, observe how wise is the theory at all events of our constitution in this matter. Certain laws are the laws of England, according to which the criminal justice of the country must be administered. Nevertheless it is impossible for those who enact statutes, to foresee all the particular cases that may occur. Nor could the legislature on these occasions interpose its special authority. Such is the weakness, the limited nature and faculties of man. Accordingly much discretionary power is supposed to be entrusted to those who administer the law.

A court of justice has two main duties to perform: (1) to determine the question of guilt or innocence; (2) to punish the guilty. Now in order to ascertain the truth of facts, certain great principles are laid down by the legislature. Thus, for instance, though in general testimony is not received save on oath, still the declaration of a man, who in making it knew that he was at the point of death, is admissible: because the solemnity of the circumstances is conceived to have made as strong an impression upon his mind as an oath. Again, the testimony of a convicted felon is of no weight, unless corroborated. Nevertheless, though various rules for guidance

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are thus established, the jury must ultimately determine the question of guilt according to the whole of the evidence adduced in a particular case. But again, in regard to the conduct proper to be adopted after guilt is proved, certain general maxims are established, and the law in some measure determines the punishment to be assigned. Still much latitude is left to the judge. In cases of manslaughter, which seem to admit almost all shades of guilt, from justifiable homicide up to wilful murder, all sorts of punishments, short of death, are in the power of the judge. Again, it may appear in evidence that one man is urged by hunger to commit a theft: another has no such mitigating plea. The variety of palliating or aggravating circumstances may be endless. Accordingly it is intended that the general rules should be susceptible of modification, so that, if possible, what is perfectly reasonable may be done on each special occasion. If this is accomplished, we have a specimen of the just appreciation of man's position, and indeed, what mainly concerns us, an example for the imitation of each particular person in training and disciplining his own mind. The necessity of general principles is admitted: and the duty rests with the legislature to make such laws as may be consistent with perfect reason. On particular occasions care

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must be taken that these laws be duly applied: that on the one hand they be not relaxed; nor on the other strained beyond their legitimate scope and intention; but that they may best fulfil the purposes for which they were enacted. Similarly men may prepare themselves for the duties of active life. They may arm themselves with abstract principles,* taking heed that these principles be consistent with truth, justice, benevolence, such in fact as ought to be permanently enthroned in their minds. When particular calls for action arise, they may then apply what they have obtained, in a fair and proper manner, to the circumstances presented to them: and thus, their original principles being right and duly applied,† they will fulfil the great

* A mind intent upon self-improvement will continually give its attention to the consideration of principles involved in matters apparently most trivial. Though such matters do not perhaps immediately concern his conduct, the wise man turns them to account by making them a vehicle of instruction. Here then is no impertinent or flippant judge. (See above p. 74.) Much more does he strengthen his principles by tracing the results of conduct, especially of his own past conduct, in affairs of importance.

† It will easily appear that the considerations in the text may assist us in giving an answer to unjust claims of persons, who sometimes endeavour to support such claims by an appeal to precedents. The claims perhaps allowed in the precedents were just. There right principles were duly applied. But

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law of moral agents, and act agreeably to the intentions of the Lawgiver.

Accordingly our Saviour tells us, that "every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."* Long observation and experience have taught the mariner (suppose), that certain indications in the sky portend a storm. His rules are stored in his mind; and he refuses to sail and endanger the lives of the passengers committed to his charge; though these passengers probably, whose minds are not similarly furnished, are ignorant of the risk. Again, the British minister, imbued with constitutional principles, knows that when parliament is adverse, he ought to resign. On such a point the uninstructed peasant is wholly incompetent to judge; though he admits that it is his duty to work for his livelihood, and to maintain his wife and children.

It is worthy of remark however, that not only do general rules both admit and require quali-

though the precedents might have contained circumstances similar to those in the cases which are called like; they also, beyond doubt, shewed marks of distinction. Such distinguishing features are to be alleged as the answer. Nevertheless in such matters the unwary are sometimes entrapped.

* Matt. xiii. 52.

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fications and restrictions; but some special cases occur which are altogether exceptions to these rules. And errors in judgment do at times arise in consequence of men's adhering too pertinaciously to what they have treasured up in their minds, and not making due allowance for peculiar circumstances. It must be allowed that there is considerable difficulty in admitting these exceptions. The mind being accustomed to a certain regularity in its operations, spontaneously and without effort pursues its usual course; whereas it does require an effort to divert its attention to a due appreciation of those things which set aside the general rule and mark the exception. God indeed, agreeably to His high attributes under all circumstances, acts with perfect reason, perfect propriety. But a variety of cases, like in some respects, yet unlike in others, being presented to man; he is in danger, by his too close observance of general rules, of violating, on some particular occasion, those eternal principles of truth, justice, and benevolence on which the rules are founded, and in subordination to which they can alone be tolerated. This too is a danger of that which is not only bad in itself, but of which the example is likewise very pernicious. For the error is naturally that of men of a high stamp of mind; who admit, as they ought, the obligation

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of acting upon general principles; men therefore of character and influence, whose authority is marked and quoted.

In discussing this subject of general principles, it may not be superfluous strongly to insist upon the immense importance of the great principles with which you are imbued and armed, being essentially true and right, as well as admitted with their proper limitations and restrictions. If this be not so, when a case is presented, you approach it in an unhealthy state of mind. You have a preliminary tendency to error. You are in fact a partial and prejudiced judge. You refer the circumstances in which you are interested to discover truth, to some maxim false in itself, or in that undue extension and application which you are now disposed to give to it, and which therefore, as far as your present purpose is concerned, vitiates it, and for that purpose renders it such as if it was universally false. Your fundamental principle therefore being wrong, your judgment based upon it is erroneous. To illustrate this matter, take the case of the Jews, who expected that their Messiah would appear as a mighty temporal prince; and therefore approached the consideration of his claims with unfair minds. They were prejudiced, *i.e.* had judged before, and assumed as a fundamental truth, and stored up

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in their minds, what was not built upon evidence, viz. that Christ must thus of necessity appear as a temporal deliverer; and therefore there was an obstacle *in limine* to the reception of what was offered them. They referred His claims to a notion essentially false, and accordingly their judgment was naturally wrong. Here was a case too of paramount importance. But, in general, the importance of being forearmed with right and free from erroneous maxims, will appear from the consideration, that in the continual bustle and turmoil of life men have not time in each particular case to weigh separately every thing which is implied in that case. They are required to act energetically and as it were instinctively; and such energy and as it were instinct are in reality but the development of principles previously nourished and cherished.

We hear much of men's prejudices preventing them from appreciating truth. Some persons, according to the example of the Jews just mentioned, appear to have harboured in their minds maxims essentially false. Hence wherever these maxims are involved, their judgment is necessarily erroneous. Others of a better stamp cherish, and even vehemently assert principles of very questionable truth and small importance: thus their minds being occupied with what is altogether

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unworthy of holding a fixed habitation therein, they are fettered and embarrassed in some given case by considerations which deserve not a moment's entertainment: accordingly they miss, or only with difficulty attain their object, viz. truth. In either of these cases is exemplified the usual meaning of the word *prejudice*, which is generally taken in an evil signification.

But, if we consider the derivation of the word, to have *judged beforehand*, and to have admitted into the mind certain great principles of action, which are true and right and worthy to be entertained, is altogether the duty of intellectual and responsible man.

It is a common allegation of some men when they have acted wrongly, that they have acted according to their conscience. They forget the previous obligation by which they were bound, of purifying and enlightening their consciences, of eradicating erroneous principles and implanting right. In regard to this temper and disposition of mind, in which the conscience is inefficient and self-deceit is admitted, Bishop Butler has the following passage: "The temper (he writes) is essentially in its own nature vicious and immoral. It is unfairness. It is dishonesty. It is falseness of heart: and is therefore so far from extenuating guilt, that it is itself the greatest of

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all guilt, in proportion to the degree it prevails; for it is a corruption of the whole moral character in its principle. Our understanding and sense of good and evil is the light and guide of life. 'If therefore this light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.'"*

Other men again appear to be the blind slaves of their passions: acting as "the beasts that perish,"† they seem to forget that though thus degraded, still they cannot divest themselves of the responsibility attached to the possession of the higher faculties with which they have been endowed. For all these things God will bring them to judgment.

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* Butler's Sermons. † Ps. xlix. 12.

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CHAPTER VII.

OBEDIENCE TO GOD, THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INQUIRER. FOUNDATIONS OF THAT PRINCIPLE.

Up to this point our attention has been principally directed to the consideration of probable evidence. This however is but a part of the moral evidence subjected to our examination, and serves merely as a mean to an end. Our business is to inquire into the whole of that, which manifests the conduct that ought to be adopted by intellectual and immortal man.

Nevertheless the subject of probable evidence presenting many difficulties, it has appeared necessary to dwell thereupon at some length: and it so happens, that, while it was our main design to illustrate and to confirm evidence, shewing that things have been, are, will be, and thus clearly to ascertain and establish preliminary principles, we have yet obtained much which at once teaches propriety of conduct.

In the last chapter, indeed, it was our endeavour to shew, that men must adopt great

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principles of judging to be treasured up in their minds, and applied as occasion requires, in order that with reference to particular cases they may be able to discover the past, present, or future existence of things. But additional considerations were introduced. It appeared that the same course must be pursued in regard to principles, shewing what ought to be. As on the one hand men's maxims are to be founded upon truth, and duly applied, so on the other they are to be consistent with justice and benevolence, as well as carried out in the spirit in which they are adopted. Here then is an account of what ought to be done beyond the discovery of the past, present, and future existence of things; even though such discovery be accompanied by the ulterior but insufficiently defined view of founding measures thereupon.

But more than this: In the earlier part of his investigation, the inquirer seeking extrication from his difficulties, and confirmation of an embryo principle, was led to consider the law of nature written in man's heart. Though his notions of this law were formerly but indistinct and imperfect, still, after much painful discipline and laborious study, he heartily recognized its authority and power.

Again, desiring further illustration of his views,

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impressed with a deep conviction of the importance of a future state, influenced too by a sense of duty, he scrupulously examined the evidences of Christianity. Scripture being admitted, among other things taught him, that men are bound to obey the law of nature; and thus the obligation, which he had already acknowledged, was strengthened.

This law was in fact God's law, and shewed the inquirer what he ought to do.

The light which incidentally burst upon him was powerful, and his disposition was zealous. Accordingly he determined with strong resolution to devote himself to the service of God, doing his Master's will, in what way soever that will might be discoverable. (See p. 66.)

Obedience then was his principle.

But it is evidently of immense advantage, that great principles of human conduct should in every possible manner be illustrated and strengthened: thus the mind, whichsoever way it turns itself, will perceive and appreciate the solidity of the foundations on which it builds its superstructure, and trains itself for defence or for action.

Though then the principle of obedience has already been recognized by our inquirer, still, if we can offer any additional reflections bearing

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upon that principle, our purpose will be better answered. Scripture indeed not only inculcates and enjoins certain important rules of human conduct, agreeable to the law of nature, but shews cause why maxims should be modified or extended, and in truth commands us so to modify or extend them. Scripture then contains what may be considered supplemental to the law of nature. The inquirer therefore will be duly prepared and schooled to admit, and indeed may gladly admit, whatever explanation or confirmation of his great principle of obedience he may derive from Scripture, or from any other source.

Much more will he rejoice, if he can ascend to something high and holy, by which his relation to the Deity may appear elevated in its character as well as strengthened in its ties.

It may have been observed, that the mental discipline to which he has been subjected, has been something of the discipline of a schoolmaster; bringing him in truth to Christ, still in a severe and stern fashion. We have witnessed the difficulties of his inquiries, and have heard much of his notions of responsibility. He has professed himself indeed a sincere and zealous servant of God, and has altogether recognized his obligation to obey. But Scripture teaches us to aspire to a nobler obedience, that of sons. "Now I say

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(writes St. Paul) that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son: and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."*

We must look then to a principle suitable to sons, rather than to servants, which indeed is the "love that casteth out fear."†

Accordingly in Scripture we perceive this conspicuous principle, asserted in the Old Testament, and emphatically repeated in the New, as the first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment."‡ Scripture then being what it is proved to be, this principle

* Gal. iv. 1, &c. † 1 John iv. 18. ‡ Matt. xxii. 37, 38.

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claims our recognition, as a command therein delivered.

But further, I will in the first place take leave to quote a passage of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, in regard to the cogency of the obligation. "We need no incentives (he says) by way of special enumeration, to move us to the love of God: for we cannot love anything, for any reason real or imaginary, but that excellence is infinitely more eminent in God. There can but two things create love, perfection and usefulness: to which answer on our part, 1. Admiration; 2. Desire: and both these are centred in love. For the entertainment of the first, there is in God an infinite nature, immensity or vastness without extension or limit, immutability, eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, dominion, providence, bounty, mercy, justice, perfection in Himself, and the end to which all things and all actions must be directed, and will at last arrive. The consideration of which may be heightened, if we consider our distance from all these glories; our smallness and limited nature, our nothing, our inconstancy, our age like a span, our weakness and ignorance, our poverty, our inadvertency and inconsideration, our disabilities and disaffections to do good, our harsh natures and unmerciful inclinations, our universal iniquity, and our ne-

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cessities and dependencies, not only on God originally and essentially, but even our need of the meanest of God's creatures, and our being obnoxious to the weakest and most contemptible. But for the entertainment of the second we may consider, that in Him is a torrent of pleasure for the voluptuous; He is the fountain of honour for the ambitious; an inexhaustible treasure for the covetous. Our vices are in love with fantastic pleasures and images of perfection; which are truly and really to be found nowhere but in God. And therefore our virtues have such proper objects, that it is but reasonable they should all turn into love: for certain it is, that this love will turn all into virtue."

But beyond this, we may consider how God has, on the score of gratitude, bound us to Himself. "We love Him because He first loved us."* Consider the benefits of creation, preservation, redemption: the proffer of means of grace, and the hope of glory. These good things might partly indeed have been perceived by the light of nature: for "God left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness."† But revelation,

* 1 John iv. 19.

† Acts xiv. 17.

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while it has authoritatively confirmed the evidence afforded by the light of nature, giving thereto the assurance derived from miracles, has likewise exhibited what our natural powers could never have discovered. Be the manner of our conviction however what it may, we at once acknowledge that benefits conferred claim a return of gratitude and love. Here again is an appeal to a primary principle implanted in man. He recognizes justice: he must also recognize gratitude. It is altogether fit and right that we should cherish a grateful sense of benefits received. The consideration however of what Scripture reveals to have been done by God for man, increases the debt of love that is owed. Scripture too, in asserting the obligation, strengthens by its coincidence and harmony the inference which might be drawn from a mere consideration of the law of nature written upon our hearts.

So that, on the whole, man ought to love God, in consideration of facts and relations, which may be known independently of revelation. Scripture reasserts these facts and relations, and also exhibits new ones, thus rendering more clear, and increasing the obligation. The sense of the debt is a part of the natural law, and this sense is impressed more deeply by a command delivered in Scripture.

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Also it is right that man should love God with all his heart, soul, and mind, *i.e.* with his greatest energy and intensity: for God is worthy of highest admiration, and is his greatest benefactor. Accordingly this intensity of love is a portion of the command given.

Our inquirer having weighed the foregoing considerations, may find that they are strengthened by all the natural associations, of which he has experience in the ordinary affairs of life: his mind has been trained by examples of gratitude between man and man, by admiration of high qualities and endowments, by intercourse of relationship and friendship, and by benevolent feelings entertained generally to his fellow-creatures. We will therefore suppose him freely to acknowledge and cherish the principle of loving God with all his heart and all his soul and all his mind.

Now, according to Scripture, love is shewn by obedience. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments."* Again, "faith working by love"† is delivered as a great principle of human action. "He that cometh to God must (of course) believe that He is:"‡ else how can he come unto Him? We believe however, not

* 1 John v. 3. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ Heb. xi. 6.

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only that God is, but also that He hath done for us those things which He is said to have done, and that He is willing to do "more than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or than it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive."* Accordingly, being disposed in return to render the love which is due to our great Benefactor, we shall exhibit our feeling by obedience, by a hearty and persevering endeavour to do the will of Him to whom so much is owed. This is a natural vent and ebullition of love, felt by the inferior and dependent to the superior and protecting Being. We see it continually exemplified in various relations of human life. A loving child does the will of its parent, is obedient. A loving wife does those things which she knows will be approved by her husband. To obey is part of her marriage-vow.

Love to God then being admitted, we perceive that, both according to the law of nature and to Scripture, and agreeably to our own observation and experience, obedience does thence flow.

Thus then we understand the strength of those foundations on which rests our principle of obedience.

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* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THREEFOLD DUTY OF MAN.

Moralists are accustomed to divide the duty of man into three parts: (1) his duty to God; (2) his duty to his neighbour; (3) his duty to himself. This is agreeable to what St. Paul writes to Titus: "For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."*

But if we take obedience to God as a primary principle of human conduct, we shall see that man's duties to his neighbour and to himself will in reality be only parts of the duty to God, being discharged with reference to the Deity, and in obedience to His commands.

Only in what is called the duty to God, an exclusive reference to Him seems contemplated, and He is the immediate object to whom the duty is applicable.

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* Tit. ii. 11, 12.

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The first four commandments in the decalogue are particularly connected with our duty to God.

Also Scripture teaches us that our devotions and services, as religious beings, are to be paid to God in the name of Jesus Christ.

With respect to our duty to our neighbour, we find that after Christ had delivered what He termed the first and great commandment, *i.e.* love to God, He added, "The second is like unto it: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* It is also elsewhere said, "Owe no man anything but to love one another."† "All things, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."‡ Which is explained to mean, that we should do to others whatsoever we could reasonably expect them to do to us, if, circumstances being reversed, they were in our position and we in their position.

Again, particular injunctions, founded upon and carrying out this idea of love to our neighbour, abound in Scripture.

The love of our neighbour, like that of God, will of course shew itself by action.

For further confirmation of the principle of love to our neighbour, evincing itself in our conduct, we may observe how much God has

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* Matt. xxii. 39. † Rom. xiii. 8. ‡ Matt. vii. 12.

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done for all men, even for the unthankful and the evil. To act kindly therefore to our neighbour, would be exactly in accordance with what we perceive Him to have done, a carrying out of His evident purposes and intentions.

The idea that the Creator should thus benefit His creatures, and expect them to interchange mutual good offices, is illustrated and typified by the consideration of a father, both himself benefiting his children, and rejoicing when they behave kindly to each other.

Again, let us consider that man is placed in such circumstances as naturally to require this exchange of kindnesses: and God having so placed him must have foreseen the effect and the necessity which would follow; and therefore virtually imposed such necessity. Hence we shall be obliged to allow that God designed the principle to be carried out, *i.e.* He gave a law to men, that they should benefit each other.

Agreeably to these maxims, or rather in proof of them, we find that men naturally admit and cherish sentiments of benevolence and love to their fellow-creatures.* Especially we remark

* "Should any one mar, tear, or deface our picture, or shew any kind of disrespect thereto, we should be

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feelings of pity to distress, of parental, filial, fraternal affection. The sincerity too of such sentiments is exhibited by actions flowing from them.

Moreover these feelings, being that natural affection which is mentioned in Scripture,* are recognized as right (which is an important point) by the common sense of mankind. No one feels ashamed of them. In fact a man, on the contrary, rather feels shame if he is not thus influenced. If, being carried beyond due bounds, they lead to what is wrong, they are still considered a palliation and mitigation of error. What bonds of union are exhibited in the touching story of Joseph and his brethren. What varied sentiments we experience in the perusal. Our indignation is roused by the cruel conduct of his brothers. In their distress they exclaim, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." But both

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offended, taking it for an indignity put on ourselves: and as for ourselves we should never in such a manner affront or despite ourselves: every man is such, our most lively image, representing us most exactly in all the main figures and features of body, of soul, of state." — Barrow's Sermons.

* Rom. i. 31.

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our indignation and their remorse prove the same thing, viz. the strength of the tie they despised. Again, we are moved by the struggles of Jacob's mind: in spite of the famine, "My son," he cries out, "shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befal him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." What can be more pathetic than the following: "Joseph asked his brethren of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake: is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lift up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brothers: and he sought where to weep, and he entered into his chamber and wept there." At last however "Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him: and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me; and there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud." "Doth

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my father yet live?" was his inquiry. But his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence." Naturally enough. All this is indeed faithful painting: and the common notions of mankind, favourable to these feelings of paternal, filial, and brotherly love, are at all events evidence (give to it such respect as it may deserve) of their propriety, that is, of their being a portion of the law of the Creator.

In regard to what is called "a man's duty to himself," the expression seems particularly to refer to his cherishing and cultivating (in obedience to the law of God) such principles as more especially concern the regulation of his own mind and body; with respect to which his neighbour, though remotely, is not so directly interested. The propriety of the term may be defended on the ground, that the duty has immediate reference to a man's own self. To discharge it will of course be for his good, but so also will it be for his good to fulfil the duty which he owes to his neighbour. (See below, Ch. IX.)

The laws of self-preservation, and of acquisition of what is good for himself, are, we cannot doubt, laws given by God to man. Choice of the good and rejection of the evil were recognized by our inquirer at the commencement

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of his investigation. And by whom was the desire of good and the abhorrence of evil implanted but by the great Creator? Can any one suppose that if God, with paternal love, pours forth His benefits upon us, and protects us from dangers, He does not also design that we should, according to our ability, benefit and guard ourselves? To preserve our own life then, our health, and property; to receive and enjoy with innocency and moderation the good that God gives, are evidently portions of our duty to ourselves. To curb and discipline our passions, (see below Book III.) to be temperate, free from pride, modest, chaste, contented, resigned, are also portions.

The duty is proved, because there are many passages of Scripture by which it is supported: it is moreover entirely suitable to the circumstances in which man is placed by his Creator: its tendency too may be shewn to be good. Our discharge of this duty therefore may be received as originating in the great principle already recognized, that is to say, obedience to God.

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CHAPTER IX.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF OBEDIENCE.

It has now, I trust, been made sufficiently to appear, that an immense debt of love and obedience is due from man to God. That the creature should carry out the designs, and fulfil the will of the Creator, would at once be considered essentially right and proper: and relations subsequent to that established by mere creation, strengthen and enlarge the obligation. But it is also plain that it will be good for us thus to feel and act; to adopt such a training of our hearts and minds, that it may be our perpetual endeavour either to execute what God expressly enjoins, or to carry out such purposes as we know by clear inference will be acceptable in His sight.

An omniscient Creator must know much better than beings of finite intelligence, what is suitable to the capacities of His creatures, what within their power of attainment, and really good for

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them to enjoy. Again, creation and preservation are evidences of the Divine benevolence. Paley argues thus: "Contrivance proves design; and the predominant tendency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer. The world abounds with contrivances; and all the contrivances which we are acquainted with are directed to beneficial purposes. Evil, no doubt, exists; but is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance.....This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing the implements of husbandry, you would hardly say of the sickle that it is made to cut the reaper's fingers, though, from the construction of the instrument and the manner of using it, this mischief often follows. But if you had occasion to describe instruments of torture and execution, this engine, you would say, is to extend the sinews; this to dislocate the joints; this to break the bones; this to scorch the soles of the feet. Here pain and misery are the very objects of the contrivance. Now nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature..... Since then God hath called forth His wisdom to contrive and provide for our happiness, and the world appears to have been constituted with this design at first, so long as this constitution is upholden by Him, we must in reason suppose

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the same design to continue."* Moreover, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life:"† how then is it conceivable, that since the Almighty has undertaken to direct our path, He should not direct us to good? Suppose that in the course of human affairs, we were engaged in some business, where it was necessary to take a decided line of action; and that we had a powerful friend, whose wisdom with respect to the matter in hand we knew to be greatly superior to our own, and of whose kindness we had already experienced numberless proofs: should we not at once be ready to place confidence in him, and to take his guidance, especially if it was proffered, as more likely to lead to good, than our own? Do not men thus continually follow the directions of men; obey their physicians, lawyers, spiritual guides, teachers of any kind? Does not a soldier thus trust a popular and experienced general? a child a parent? Yet how infinitely short do these representations fall of the thing intended to be

* Paley's Moral Philosophy. See the whole chapter on the Divine Benevolence.

† John iii. 16.

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exhibited; since God is immeasurably the greatest of benefactors, and His wisdom is unerring.

Again, experience shews what great temporal advantages would arise to society in general, and to individuals in particular, if men constantly obeyed the Divine law. Butler imagines a kingdom or society of men altogether virtuous, and shews the tendency of this virtue to procure superiority and additional power: the head of such a kingdom (he says) would be a universal monarch. Whatever would be advantageous for the whole society, would of course be advantageous for the individuals of whom that society was composed. Even as matters now stand, health, long life, and a certain cheerful elasticity of spirit are usually the fruits of Christian sobriety: character and influence among men follow the discharge of our duty to our neighbour; benevolence itself causes pleasure to the benevolent: a man who faithfully devotes himself to the service of God, feels confidence in the Divine protection:

> Si fractus illabatur orbis,
> Impavidum ferient ruinæ.
>
> HOR.

He experiences what has been called the joy of a good conscience, the peace of God which passeth all understanding. All these things are main elements of temporal happiness. The considera-

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tions, moreover, of a future judgment are alone amply sufficient to assure men that the greatest good at which they can aim is to obtain the favour of God, the greatest evil into which they can fall is to incur His displeasure. For, on the one hand, Scripture does hold out to those "who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality," "eternal life:" on the other hand, it denounces against "them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil."* On the whole, then, "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."†

We thus perceive a source of consolation in all dangers and difficulties, and we cherish a hope of benefits both temporal and eternal, in the reflection that we may, if we will, obtain the protection and favour of an Almighty defender and benefactor. Accordingly, from a consideration of the results that will follow, we gain auxiliary support of our principle of obedience.‡

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* Rom. ii. 7—9. † 1 Tim. iv. 8.

‡ Speaking of a regard to what is right, and of a regard to our happiness on the whole, "both principles," says Reid,

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We have now, then, a compass and rudder to direct us in a difficult and perilous navigation:

Ἡ δ' ἀρετὴ σταθερόν τι καὶ ἄτροπον· ἧς ἐπὶ μούνης
Κύματα θαρσαλέως ποντοπόρει βιότου.*

"are leading principles, both suppose the use of reason, and when rightly understood both lead to the same course of life. They are like two fountains, whose streams unite and run in the same channel."

"In English," remarks Stewart, "we use the word *reasonable* with the same latitude, and indeed almost exactly in the same sense, in which Cicero defines *officium*, 'id quod cur factum sit, ratio probabilis reddi potest.'" This may refer either to the *honestum*, which implies a sense of duty, or to the sense of expediency, *utile*.

A main objection to Paley's system of morals seems to be, that he has neither taken the high ground, nor all the ground which he might have taken. By every method short of actually compelling us to obey, God impresses His laws upon our hearts. First, the principle of obedience is recognized by the conscience of mankind. It is morally right that the created, preserved, redeemed, fallible, ignorant, weak being should obey and depend upon its infallible, omniscient, almighty Creator, Preserver, Redeemer. Disobedience is something monstrous. There is a plain beauty in virtue, deformity in vice. Again, there are future punishments of the most dreadful kind denounced against transgressors: they suffer the pains too of tormenting passions; ultimately broken health, disgrace, remorse, even in this world. The good, on the contrary, find that pious and kind feelings, and the mere exercise of goodness, are a source of pure delight: that the ulterior results are main elements of temporal happiness: and they see before them the prospect of everlasting glory. Here are appeals to our hopes, our fears, our love. All these are urged in Scripture.

* Anthol. Græc.

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And we find an answer to our anxious inquiry, What are we to do as men placed in the world? "Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."*

* Eccles. xii. 13.

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CHAPTER X.

GOOD AND EVIL ESTIMATED, AS BEING IN ACCORDANCE WITH, OR IN OPPOSITION TO, THE WILL OF GOD. NEVERTHELESS (ORDINARILY SPEAKING) WHAT APPEARS GOOD IS GOOD, AND WORTHY OF PURSUIT UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS.

It may be recollected that the inquirer was first moved to the investigation which he has pursued, by considerations of good and evil. He had found out that to give full license to passion was not good, and had then hoped that mere human sagacity would shew him what he wished: but in the progress of his inquiry he has been led on in a manner somewhat different from what he expected, and has been enabled to lay strong foundations of moral and religious truth. His investigation was no improper one: and whatever ideas he might have entertained of its nature, and of the answers likely to be obtained, still his questions have been answered. It is good to obey God, evil to offend Him. Here is a high principle to adduce against antagonist principles, and by which to be governed,

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Indeed, beyond this we cannot absolutely desire one event rather than another, without presumption, and without making ourselves the judges of all that train of future things which God has concealed from our view:

> Prudens futuri temporis exitum
> Caliginosâ nocte premit Deus.*

We know not what is most profitable for us, power or weakness, riches or poverty, honour or dishonour, health or sickness, life or death:†

> Permittas ipsis expendere numinibus quid
> Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris:
> Carior est illis homo quam sibi.‡

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* Hor. *Od.* III. 29. † New Manual of Devotions.

‡ Juv. X. Even the Fabulist illustrates this matter by his tale of the herdsman, who, missing a heifer, vowed to Jupiter that he would sacrifice a kid if the god would discover to him the thief. By and by, searching everywhere, "he espied the carcase of his heifer, and a lion growling over it and feeding upon it. This sight almost frightened him out of his senses, and falling down upon his knees, 'O Jupiter,' he exclaimed, 'I promised thee a kid to shew me the thief, but now I promise thee a bull if thou wilt deliver me from his claws.'"

Jeremy Taylor gives us a story of an Egyptian robber, who, "sleeping under a rotten wall, was awakened by Serapis, and sent away from the ruin: but being quit from the danger, and seeing the wall to slide, he thought that the demon loved his crime because he had so strangely preserved him from a sudden and violent death. But Serapis told him, 'I saved you from the wall to reserve you for the wheel,' from a short and private death to a painful and disgraceful."

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It may be observed, that we have a difficulty in absolutely judging what is good or evil, beyond that which we experienced in determining what was true or false: for events do certainly happen or do not happen, irrespectively of persons; whereas they may be good or evil for one person, and not for another. Thus, for instance, before the battle of Cannæ, Hannibal, in looking to the future, might not only have considered whether it was likely that he should be victorious; but the question might also have occurred, how far even victory would be good. Livy however tells us, "Hannibali nimis læta res est visa, majorque quam ut eam statim capere animo posset." So he delays to march to Rome. Accordingly, "Vincere scis Hannibal; victoriâ uti nescis" is the reproof of the eager Maharbal. Even if we regard more remote events:

> Exitus ergo quis est? O gloria! Vincitur idem
> Nempe, et in exilium præceps fugit, atque ibi magnus
> Mirandusque cliens, sedet ad prætoria regis,
> Donec Bithyno libeat vigilare tyranno.
> Finem animæ, quæ res humanas miscuit olim
> Non gladii, non saxa dabunt, non tela; sed ille
> Cannarum vindex, et tanti sanguinis ultor
> Annulus. JUV. X.

Contrast with this the conduct and the fortunes of our own great leader after the battle of Waterloo.

On the whole, then, we may be warned, that in choosing what appears good, and rejecting

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what to our limited faculties seems evil, we be not too ardently desirous in our pursuit of the former, nor too anxiously energetic in avoiding the latter. One who knew not Christ prayed thus:

Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὰ μὲν ἔσθλα καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνευκτοις
Ἄμμι δίδου· τὰ δὲ λυγρὰ καὶ εὐχομένων ἀπερύκοις.

Where we are but passive, let us take heed that we rejoice not overmuch in what is called prosperity, nor grieve in adversity. The remembrance of death taught this wisdom to the poet:

Æquam memento rebus in arduis
Servare mentem, non secus in bonis
Ab insolenti temperatam
Lætitiâ, moriture Deli.

Hor. *Od.* II. 3.

A Christian philosopher would of course carry the principle much further. "When a sadness lies heavy upon thee (writes Jeremy Taylor), remember that thou art a Christian designed for the inheritance of Jesus. And what dost thou think concerning thy great fortune, thy lot and portion of eternity? Dost thou think thou shalt be saved or damned? Indeed if thou thinkest thou shalt perish, I cannot blame thee to be sad, sad till thy heart-strings crack: but then why art thou troubled at the loss of thy money? What should a damned man do with money, which in so great a sadness it is impossible for him to enjoy? Did ever any man upon

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the rack afflict himself because he had received a cross answer from his mistress? or call for the particulars of a purchase on the gallows?" Considerations allied to these may likewise allay the intoxication of joy, the "*insolens lætitia.*"

Moreover, in regard to affliction, we have before us the example of our Divine Master: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."* Also we know that out of apparent evil God is accustomed to bring good: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?.....Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby."†

These considerations may assist us in disciplining our minds for the accidents of life; which discipline is in fact a part of the business that every one has to do as a man placed in the world.

Still pain is pain, and pleasure pleasure. God

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* Matt. xxvi. 39. † Heb. xii. 6, et seq.

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is shewn to be good by the many benefits He confers. We are enjoined to praise Him, because "He has given us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."* We pray to Him for future benefits. We find that temporal good things were given to the Jews, according to promise, as proofs of the Divine favour. We have seen too that "godliness hath the promise of the life that now is."† If therefore anything bears upon it the semblance of good, such semblance is *primâ facie* evidence that it is good. Accordingly, when we are required to act, we are justified in arguing, that if a course of conduct appears to be good, and there is nothing to shew that God will disapprove, it is good, and therefore He will approve. For instance, I see a man in danger of being drowned, and from a motive of benevolence exert myself to save his life: there is evidence that God will approve the act, as being directed to the accomplishment of what appears good, viz. the preservation of human life.

Thus then even our inquirer's first illustration is still apposite. He remarked (see p. 5) that fire when too nearly approached would scorch, but otherwise would cherish and warm: and that in

* Acts xiv. 17. † 1 Tim. iv. 8.

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such a case he must avoid the evil and choose the good. God, no doubt, intended this rejection and choice. When therefore man is warmed and cherished by approaching the fire, he assuredly fulfils the design of his benevolent Preserver, avails himself of the good given, and at the time possibly, admitting a grateful aspiration to the Giver, may be said to obey St. Paul's exhortation "to do all things to the glory of God."* On the other hand, if a man should wantonly and recklessly allow himself to be scorched, would not his conduct, a conduct contrary to reason, God's guide within him, naturally be unpleasing in the sight of the Deity? Here would in fact be choice of the evil. To choose the good and to reject the evil are indeed, in the first instance, primary principles of man's nature: still, after he has arrived at a knowledge of God's attributes, and of his own relation to God, it is manifest that these primary principles may be taken as indices of the intentions of the Creator. They become sanctified and hallowed by considerations, which in the commencement of his investigation our inquirer was not duly prepared to admit. Still though the law of self-preservation be given to man to obey, yet martyrs were found, who in the early times of Christianity encountered death, chose

* 1 Cor. x. 31.

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to be thus scorched and consumed, rather than surrender the truth. In fact a principle of martyrdom is to give up the weaker law, in order that the stronger may be obeyed. It being shewn that one command of the Lawgiver is more stringent than another, it inevitably follows, that when these two conflict, the subject is bound to obey the former. Thus, on the whole, obeying the law, he chooses the good, though he give his body to be burned.*

* In the case of martyrdom the conflict of principles is exhibited in a most striking and conspicuous manner. In our days such fiery trials are not proposed to men. Nevertheless self-denial and mortification of our evil passions are a portion of our duty (see below, Book III.). We are, as it were, to crucify them (Gal. v. 24). This you may, if you please, call a species of martyrdom. But there is a higher kind than this: for it often happens in the conduct of human life, that (putting mere passion out of the question) the path of duty can only be pursued by compelling an essentially weaker principle to submit to a stronger; though it be acknowledged that such weaker principle has force, is consistent with right reason, and is worthy of high consideration and respect. Thus, for instance, we give up father or mother for Christ's sake. In such cases as these possibly we are somewhat perplexed, and are led perhaps to speak of a conflict of duties; though the expression may not be strictly correct: there is a conflict of principles; but the duty is manifestly to obey the stronger. Herein then, as martyrs, we make a sacrifice of what we know to be valuable and to possess weight, for the sake of giving a practical testimony to our sense of duty. Accordingly we choose the good.

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It will have been observed, that since our inquirer, recognizing the paramount obligation of duty to God, also acknowledges the subordinate duties to his neighbour and to himself, his views are now much more comprehensive than formerly. He is prepared to cherish and to dwell upon the considerations of good and evil, not merely as connected with the principles of self-preservation and selfish enjoyment: he seeks truth not simply as a mean to these ends; but admitting gratitude to God and benevolence to men, he loves truth as tending likewise to the carrying out of such grateful and benevolent sentiments. The term *duty* too is consecrated and hallowed by a continual reference to God, so that in fact this notion of a threefold duty might perhaps seem essentially improper, were there not always an implied reference to God, and a certain convenience in adopting the division. The inquirer again loves truth not merely as furthering his purposes in some particular cases, but as itself forming an element in the Divine character; itself of excellent beauty and worthy of highest admiration; itself implied in that moral harmony which is recognized by the mind of man and approved throughout Scripture; itself tending to the general good of mankind, and in all cases

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where it can be desired without impertinence or immodest intrusion, universally desirable.

But while we thus love truth, and apply it to the benefit of ourselves* and others, care must be taken that in carrying out our obedience, we endeavour to do it fully and entirely: and that in aiming at the accomplishment of our objects, we use only such means as are justifiable. Otherwise, in our attempt to fulfil one law we

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* The language which some persons at times use, would seem to indicate that, though they consider themselves to owe a duty to their neighbour, they may do pretty much as they please in regard to themselves. Thus, though they would on no account injure the property, the health, or the reputation of others, they are frequently ready to sacrifice their own; and so improper concessions are erroneously deemed the mark of exalted virtue. Here then is the fruit of liberality not chastised by right principle. But the commandment is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," not "better than thyself." All our powers both of body and mind, all our opportunities and privileges are the property of God, to be applied by us as stewards. We are not our own, but bought with a price.

Well-meaning persons may sometimes use an exaggerated manner of talking, in respect to these matters, with a view of combating the selfish propensities of mankind: say that we are all too prone to promote our own interests at the expense of our neighbour; these persons possibly think that a counteracting tendency may be supplied by the use of language stronger than is warrantable. But surely things should be stated as they are.

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shall assuredly violate another. To do evil that good may come is contrary to our natural sense of propriety. It is opposed to our primary notions of what a being such as God, most just and holy, who Himself on all occasions acts with the most perfect rectitude, would approve. Again, there is an implied condemnation in the words of St. Paul: "We be slanderously reported, (*βλασφημοῦμεθα*), and some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come."* Why *slanderously*, if the thing is innocent? Moreover if we do the evil, that deed is certainly accomplished, while the attainment of the good being future, is therefore uncertain.

We may illustrate what has been said, by taking as an example for warning, the conduct of a man, who being placed in some position of trust, appoints an unfit person to the discharge of duties, for which his only recommendation is consanguinity (suppose) to the patron. Here the object, that of benefiting a kinsman, is certainly good. But the means are unjust.†

In considering then all the circumstances of

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* Rom. iii. 8.

† Euripides puts a sentiment in the mouth of Eteocles altogether to be repudiated:

εἴπερ γὰρ, ἀδικεῖν χρὴ, τυραννίδος πέρι
κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν· τἄλλα δ' εὐσεβεῖν χρεών.

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his position, and laying down his principles of action, a man will not only recollect that he must seek for truth as a mean to the end that he may obtain good and avoid evil; but also his line of conduct, from the beginning to the termination of any enterprise, must be consistent with the principles of justice and propriety.

It will not be forgotten, that a primary principle implanted in man's nature is that he should aim at the accomplishment of objects. (See p. 4.) This, no doubt, is a law of the Lawgiver. It was not intended that the human mind should lie fallow in unprofitable idleness. God, when He gave reason, designed that the gift should be applied.

Also if we aim at avoiding evil, we may be considered as aiming at good.

When we endeavour to discharge our duty to God, to our neighbour, or to ourselves, it may be said that we are aiming at a good object. Herein especially, if we take pains to appreciate the perfections of God, as far as our limited faculties will permit, and to estimate His dealings with ourselves individually, so that we may duly pray to Him and praise Him, it may be considered that we are aiming at good.

On the whole then, to aim at objects being a law, and to take care that such objects be

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good, being the mark of a good man; and after all our reasonings the love of truth, justice, benevolence, becoming only still more firmly settled in our hearts, we may briefly assert as a very comprehensive principle of human action, the following: that is to say, In cases involving our moral conduct, let us at all times honestly endeavour to appreciate the evidence which discloses truth, in order that we may, in a proper and justifiable manner, apply it to the accomplishment of good objects, in obedience to the commands of God, and to the promotion of His honour and glory.

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CHAPTER XI.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS RESPECTING THE APPLICATION OF OUR PRINCIPLES.

It will of course be borne in mind, that in considering the question of the proper and justifiable manner in which it behoves a man to carry out his purposes, we must observe his position with reference to the affairs in which he takes part, and possibly the authority by which he acts. Thus the situation and circumstances of one person may be such, that he may, with the most perfect propriety, promote certain good objects, for the accomplishment of which it would be impertinent in another man, not occupying a similar ground, to interfere. Suppose, for instance, that the government of one country should pretend to introduce laws for the regulation of the internal affairs of another independent state. The laws might be perfectly good; altogether suitable to the wants of the people for whom they were intended; vigorously executed: and yet, not originating in a just authority, would involve an

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improper and impertinent intrusion. It behoves man therefore to confine himself to his own legitimate sphere and field of action.

For further illustration of the necessity or duty of taking into account the propriety of the means by which we strive to obtain good, let us look again to what abounds in sources of instructive information and example, that is to say, the practice of our courts of justice. It has been said that the business of the judge, acting for the good of society, is to inflict such a punishment upon the criminal, acknowledged to be guilty, as may suffice for the terror of evil-doers, and, as far as possible, for the suppression of crime. But the question may arise, Are the means strictly justifiable? First, is the evidence of that highly probable character which warrants a jury in their verdict of "guilty"? If so, assuredly the criminal deserves a certain punishment; which society, doing no unjust thing, inflicting no undeserved hardship, may, for its own protection, lawfully demand. Here too, as in all other cases where it is not above our reason, Scripture coincides with the voice of right reason. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to

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thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil."* But the question still remains, What punishment is in any particular case to be inflicted? Say, for the sake of argument, that the legislature, giving no discretion to the judge, has assigned, or that the judge, not duly using the powers entrusted to him, inflicts a punishment unsuitably severe; a punishment, respecting the impropriety of which our testimony is, and indeed can be only this, that it offends the common feeling of men of religious and cultivated judgment, and is something from which such men, as it were instinctively, shrink: say, at all events, that the punishment *is* too severe for the offence: then must we come to the conclusion, that the governing power (*i. e.* the legislature which enacted an arbitrary law, or the judge who is harshly enforcing the law), though aiming at good objects, is aiming at them in not a fit manner. Accordingly, though the evil-doer be terrified, and crime in some degree suppressed, still is there a fault either in the law or its administration: and the strictly reasonable course, that which

* Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

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is acceptable in the sight of a just and holy Being, as Almighty God, is not pursued.

Can it be considered that there is anything harsh in applying these observations to the sanguinary manner in which punishment was inflicted in this country, during the last and the early part of the present century? Was society justified in punishing with death a man who stole a sheep? Though the magistrate beareth not the sword in vain, may he apply it to the shedding of human blood for any and every offence which he may wish to prevent, or there may be difficulty in preventing? Ought he not to consider the proper correspondence which should subsist between the crime and the punishment assigned? Is he to take no account of the ill-desert and the amount of what it deserves, and of that moral harmony which is violated by the arbitrary conjunction of things essentially unsuitable and disproportioned?

If it be even doubtful whether the supreme power in a country is or is not justified in the infliction of such a punishment as that of death for the offence of stealing a sheep, the existence of such doubt is alone a sufficient bar to the infliction. For the *onus probandi* lies upon the legislature. In marking out for themselves a line of conduct, it is not sufficient for them to say

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they *may* be justified. When they act they assert that they *are* justified.*

But what were the benefits resulting to society from this sanguinary infliction of punishment? Is there less security for life and property in England at the present time, *i. e.* in the year 1849, when the law or the execution thereof is comparatively merciful, than under the severe system of the last century? They who exercise such powers as are connected with the administration of justice in a country, are, without doubt, highly answerable for the manner in which they discharge the important functions committed to

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* Not many years ago there was a system of extraordinary severity, which shocked humane and Christian minds, adopted for the support of military discipline. For instance, a man was condemned by sentence of a court-martial to receive some very great number of lashes. We were informed of the offence, and if shocked at what might seem a disproportioned amount of punishment, were told of the indispensable necessity of keeping up discipline: just as we were formerly told that in a commercial country it was impossible to protect property, unless men were hanged for forgery. But admit the necessity of supporting military discipline; admit too, if you please (though some men question it), that the thing can only be done by flogging: still need so great a number of lashes as was customary have been administered? Would no smaller amount have sufficed?

These questions have now been practically answered by an alteration in the law. The above remarks were written in the year 1845, before that alteration.

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their hands. A nation itself which, under any circumstances and for any objects, sanctions harsh measures, is assuredly, as a nation, responsible. Grant that there is a principle of retributive justice, which, albeit imperfectly, still does exhibit itself even in the dispensations and arrangements of temporal affairs: is it not altogether agreeable to such a principle that too stringent proceedings, adopted on behalf of society, should not accomplish the greater security of life and property which is contemplated? but, on the contrary, should rather recoil on their authors and abettors? In fact, does it not become a question how far experience may have tended to shew that such is in reality the truth?

But if what has been stated be one extreme, let us endeavour to avoid falling into the other:

Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.*

If the magistrate beareth not the sword in vain, he must not yield to an undue leniency in favour of the offender. "Autolycus (says Jeremy Taylor) robbed the gardens of Trebonius, and asked him forgiveness and had it. But when Trebonius was chosen consul, and Autolycus robbed him again and was taken by others, and as a thief brought before him, he asked forgiveness again:

* Hor. S. I. 2. 24.

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but Trebonius condemned him to the galleys; for he, who being a private man was bound to forgive a repenting trespasser, being a magistrate was bound not to forgive him."* The duty of the magistrate is to protect the community; and society has a right to expect that a suitable punishment shall be administered. And who can doubt, who considers the moral coherence of the dispensation under which we live, that such duly proportioned punishment will, ordinarily speaking, be adequate for the accomplishment of the ends proposed?

Suppose, then, that the whole proceeding is carried on as we have conceived it ought to be: the jury are justified in their verdict of "guilty;" the judge pronounces a sentence suitable, or not unsuitable, to the crime; society, having received damage, receives now that compensation to which it is fairly entitled;† the culprit who has committed an injury is compelled to make reparation. The affair is not decided hastily, as in a rude state of society, by the wild vengeance of the populace; but the matter is carefully sifted by persons accustomed to judge upon evidence, and the authority is quoted of

* Jer. Taylor, Ductor Dub.

† Not more than the proper compensation, as has been supposed to be the case, when blood is shed for stealing a sheep.

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the sovereign and the legislature, those to whose position the adjustment of the affair is altogether suitable. A further good effect of this proceeding may possibly be the reformation of the offender, though that be not the main object contemplated any more than the measuring out of retributive justice.* It may, however, be worthy of a pass-

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* If human society was so constituted that, though grievous crimes might be committed against God, mankind could never be injured, would there be ground on which to justify the infliction of punishment by human tribunals? "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." (Rom. xiv. 4.)

But suppose my neighbour injures me, then possibly various feelings operate in my mind. I may wish to punish him; to protect myself for the future; to protect society; to reform the offender.

Revenge, however, is forbidden in Scripture. Even in regard to just anger, "which is not only innocent but a generous movement of mind." "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." (Eph. iv. 26.)

With respect to what Butler calls *settled and deliberate* resentment: "After an injury is done, and there is a necessity that the offender should be brought to justice, the cool consideration of reason that the security and peace of society requires examples of justice should be made, might indeed be sufficient to procure laws to be enacted and sentence passed: but is it that cool reflection in the injured person which, for the most part, brings the offender to justice? Or is it not resentment and indignation against the injury and the author of it? I am afraid there is no doubt which is commonly the case. This, however, is to be considered as a good effect,

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ing remark, that the necessities of men living together in a state of society, a state ordained

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notwithstanding it were much to be wished that men would act from a better principle, reason, and cool reflection."—Butler's Sermons.

Here then is a recognition of the better principle.

It may perhaps seem difficult to mark out the exact boundaries between the principle of deliberate resentment and revenge.

According to Butler, every man being a natural object of our benevolence, that benevolence ought not to be destroyed, though it may be lessened, when we suffer an injury. "It is not man's being a social creature (he writes), much less his being a moral agent, from whence *alone* our obligations to good-will towards him arise. There is an obligation to it prior to either of these, arising from his being a sensible creature, that is, capable of happiness or misery. Now this obligation cannot be superseded by his moral character." At all events, Scripture teaches us to love our enemies. Good-will therefore must not be destroyed by their misconduct.

There is plainly an abuse when "pain or harm of any kind is inflicted merely in consequence of, and to gratify deliberate resentment, though naturally raised."

Let resentment however, or righteous indignation as it has been termed, burn fiercely against evil principles. Some of this flame, especially at its outbreak, will perhaps scorch the offender. He at least cannot complain, if it afterwards assists in accomplishing his just punishment; much less if it merely enables men to tolerate such punishment, and counteracts the weakness of compassion. But let those who punish, at least propose to themselves ulterior good. Let their minds too be softened by reflecting, that "in the course of justice none of us should see mercy;" that the offender is a child of Adam,

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by the Creator, not only lead them to the relief of those necessities, but also indirectly aid in carrying out the general economy of Providence, as exemplified in the award of retributive justice

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a fellow-sinner, one for whom Christ died, and for whom we humbly hope the Atonement may yet be effectual.

We may remember also that the same sins in different persons are of very different guilt. Accordingly it is recorded of a wise and learned man, that when he heard of a criminal condemned to die, he used to think, "Who can tell if this man is not better than I? Or if I am better, it is not to be ascribed to myself, but to the goodness of God." (See Johnson's Life of Boerhaave.) Who shall say, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican"? (Luke xviii. 11.) In fact, guilt can only be truly estimated by the Judge of the whole earth: He knows the offender's natural temperament; the discipline to which he has been subjected; his use of the opportunities he has had; the strength of the temptation under which he has fallen.

We seem to want then something more than the notion of administering retributive justice, as a principle on which to punish criminals. A judge is said to have told a prisoner, "You are not punished because you stole a horse, but in order that horses may not be stolen." Though the judge might perhaps have spoken with more accuracy, his words nevertheless contain the pith of the matter, the main object of the proceeding. Still we must have the proved guilt of the accused, without which no act can justly be done. If any one should for a moment suppose, that under certain circumstances the infliction of pain upon an innocent person might benefit society; this, I conceive, is a benefit which society has no right either to demand or to expect.

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and the reformation of men's minds by a system of pain and punishment.

There has been much discussion among moralists respecting what is called the principle of Expediency: and the word is one of necessarily frequent usage. The sense in which the term appears to be understood is the following. It being admitted that men are to choose the good and reject the evil; it becomes, according to this principle, our duty to calculate what line of action, on any particular occasion, promises the most good, what threatens the most evil, and so to regulate our conduct. General as well as particular consequences are to be considered.* Nevertheless, in the practical development and application of the principle, many persons appear not enough to consider, that though God intended us to choose the good and to avoid the evil; still He also intended us to prosecute our undertakings in a proper and justifiable manner, not, in fact, to do evil that good may come.† It is good, as we have seen above, for the creature entirely to fulfil the designs of the Creator. Such fulfilment is in the whole issues and events of things really expedient. "Duty and interest (according to Butler) are perfectly coincident; for the most part in this world, but entirely, and in

* See Paley's Moral Philosophy. † See p. 143.

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every instance, if we take in the future and the whole: this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things."

An illustration of the application of this doctrine of expediency in its narrow sense may (I conceive) be found in what has been already mentioned, viz. the too severe (if it be granted that it was too severe) punishment of criminals in the last century.* Take what may perhaps be allowed to be another illustration: Say that a thief having stolen the notes of a banker, a negotiation is carried on, by which the latter recovers his notes, paying the thief a sum of money for their restoration. Here of course the banker would plead the principle of expediency: though perhaps, even according to his own notions, it might be answered, that it was questionable whether the evil of the general consequence did not overbalance the good of the particular consequence: for the general conse-

* There appeared lately in a newspaper the following paragraph: "In the reign of Henry the Eighth, according to Hume, 2000 criminals were executed annually; and during the whole period that he swayed the sceptre, 72,000 were put to death: yet Sir Thomas Moore averred, that property and person were never more insecure. In the reign of Elizabeth, from 300 to 400 suffered every year by the hands of the public executioner. England nevertheless was in a dreadful state of disorder."

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quence would be that thieves would thus acquire additional facilities in disposing of stolen property, and that a greater encouragement would therefore be given to theft. But would not the full and condemnatory answer be the following: viz. that the design of recovering his property, or a portion thereof, though good, was carried out in a manner not fit, not justifiable, and that his proceeding involved the recognition of what he knew to be a felony?

With a view to further illustration, let us assume that in many cases which are investigated by our courts of law, it is the province of the jury simply to determine whether the prisoner did the act with which he is charged. They are not judges of the propriety of the law which punishes an offence, any more than of the amount of punishment suitable to such offence. Suppose then that a person is accused of having wilfully and deliberately killed a fellow-creature, that the evidence against him is conclusive, but that the jury nevertheless acquits the prisoner because the thing has been done in a duel. Admit, if you please, in the way of mitigation, that the duel has been what is called a fair one; that certain prejudices of society have sanctioned and supported the custom; and that the provocation in this particular case has been great: what,

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nevertheless, will be the inference respecting the conduct of the jury? Will it not be that they have been endeavouring to accomplish what they conceived to be good (whether rightly or not is another question) in a manner not fit, not defensible? That they have been departing from their proper sphere, and taking care, not that their verdict should be (as the very word implies, and their oath obliged them) a true one; but that there should not follow consequences, respecting which they were in reality not at all responsible? Are we not warranted, then, in characterising such behaviour as a sacrifice of truth, and that too on a most solemn and sacred occasion, to unchastised notions of benevolence and expediency?

οὐδὲ σθένειν τοσοῦτον ᾠόμην τὰ σὰ
κηρύγμαθ' ὥστ' ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῆ Θεῶν
νόμιμα δύνασθαι θνητὸν ὄνθ' ὑπερδραμεῖν.

SOPH. ANT.*

* It is of course plain, that in what is nominally the same offence, there may be all kinds of aggravation or palliation. If one man unlawfully kills another, the legislature assigns a punishment. Any mitigation of punishment rests with the government.

If the government can at all be trusted, is not such an arrangement in general good? Mitigation is simple and easy: whereas you cannot increase a punishment, to meet the circumstances of a given case, which perhaps deserves a heavier punishment than lenient laws may assign.

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There are of course some cases, in which the means and manner of gaining the good and

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What conduct can be more injurious to society, what guilt more heinous, than that of duellists who have systematically and wantonly provoked challenges, and, aware of their own superior skill in the use of weapons, have rejoiced in the final arbitrement, an appeal to arms? Are not such men murderers in spirit, and ought not the law to hold them in its grasp?

But admit that these cases, though formerly more frequent, are now but rare: nevertheless will the practice of duelling in general be defended? "Thou shalt not kill" is the law, written in the statute-book, in Scripture, in man's heart. The advocates of duelling then must shew that their case is an exception to a general rule, their homicide justifiable.

In the army the practice has been frequent. The Prince de Condé however, a soldier and the son of a soldier, in an age not very famous for its Christian forbearance, held, "Que c'étoit à tort que la noblesse faisoit consister son honneur dans ces sortes de combats; qu' ils étoient absolument contraires aux commandemens de la Loi divine; que nous étions obligez de rapporter toutes nos pensées et nos actions à la gloire de Dieu, et non à la nôtre; que nôtre salut dépendoit uniquement de l'observation de ses préceptes; qu' il n'étoit permis de tirer l'épée que par l'ordre du Prince, pour la défense de la patrie, ou pour celle de sa vie."—*Mem. de* DE THOU.

The words of one of the most able defenders of duelling are as follows: "As men become in a high degree refined, various causes of offence arise; which are considered to be of such importance, that life must be staked to atone for them, though in reality they are not so. A body that has received a very fine polish may be easily hurt. Before men arrive at this artificial refinement, if one tells his neighbour he lies, his

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avoiding the evil, are stamped with peculiar marks of propriety and justice, wherein the

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neighbour tells him he lies; if one gives his neighbour a blow, his neighbour gives him a blow. But in a state of highly polished society, an affront is held to be a serious injury. It must therefore be resented, or rather a duel must be fought upon it; as men have agreed to banish from their society, one who puts up with an affront without fighting a duel. Now it is never unlawful to fight in self-defence. He then who fights a duel, does not fight from passion against his antagonist, but out of self-defence; to avert the stigma of the world, and to prevent himself from being driven out of society. I could wish there was not that superfluity of refinement; but while such notions prevail, no doubt a man may lawfully fight a duel."—Boswell's Life of Johnson.

If these arguments are sound, would not the principle seem to be, In any case, where any man designs to injure me, if all other means of defence are excluded, it is lawful for me to defend myself by killing him? For where is the line to be drawn? Various questions arise. May I thus protect my life, when certainly, or probably, or possibly in danger? my property from violence or fraud? If the petty pilferer is escaping from my farm-yard, may I stop his flight, aud save perhaps my duck, by shooting him? If the oppressor with the assistance of human laws, which are imperfect, designs to crush me, or the knave to cheat me, and no way of deliverance but by his death is open; if I can secretly and safely kill him, may I morally? Is my honour then so dear, and my course of action so manifest, that this honour must be redeemed with blood? Are we not almost tempted to exclaim with Horace—

..... mendax infamia terret
Quem .....?

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person who acts is, from his position, character, or qualifications especially suited for the duty he

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However it is doubtless painful to be driven from society: yet a man may betake himself to society uninitiated in duelling. It is painful to live in poverty:

> Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,
> Quam quod ridiculos homines facit. JUV.;

still it may be borne.

Even Johnson admitted that he could not explain the rationality of duelling; for the injured person risked his life equally with the aggressor.

Sometimes the greatness of the provocation is urged in favour of the duellist. But what says the law? Not only, Thou shalt not kill, but also "Avenge not yourselves: vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. xii. 19). "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matth. vi. 15).

It may perhaps be alleged that the principle of duelling tends to preserve the peace and comfort of society: rude and arbitrary minds are checked by fear of results: and though occasionally one man be killed, multitudes are benefited.

This argument I conceive has force, but is it sufficient? Might not some other method of preserving the comfort of society be devised? Are the advantages gained worth the price paid for them? Is the individual the proper judge of what is or is not on the whole beneficial to society? The legislature, which has authority to judge, and to which he is subject, "not only for wrath but also for conscience sake," condemns the practice. Yet to establish his case he ought to have a plain preponderance of argument, sufficient to overrule not merely the law of his country, but the command of the Decalogue.

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has undertaken. There are other cases, in which though the end (as we have seen) be good, the means, manner, or person are objectionable. Other occasions there, no doubt, are, whereon the endeavour to gain the good or to avoid the evil will alone warrant the conduct adopted, the means and manner and person presenting no peculiar appearance either of propriety or impropriety. Actions which are distinguished from those of a beast or a bad man are carried on with reference to a good end,* and a good inten-

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Admit however whatsoever may be fairly urged in palliation of duelling or of any particular duel. Will it be denied, that in the present day the government is always ready to take account of mitigating circumstances? Why then should the jury mistrust the government, and lest the offender should be punished too severely, acquit him altogether? virtually assert that there is no proof he did the act, when the evidence that he did it is irresistible?

It is not long since all this happened in England.

* See above, p. 6. "As to choose an end distinguishes a man from a beast, so to choose a good end is the distinction of a good man." (Jeremy Taylor). "If you caress a dog (it may be asked) or a child, what object do you propose to yourself?" "Natural necessity (writes Taylor) and the example of St. John, who recreated himself with sporting with a tame partridge, teach us that it is lawful to relax and unbend our bow." "In smaller actions (he says) and little things, and indifferent, fail not to secure a pious habitual intention; that is, that it be included within your general care that no action have an ill end: and that it be comprehended

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tion may, though at the same time it may not be able alone to justify conduct.

When we aim at good, there is, ordinarily speaking, a certainty, or a probability, or at all events a reasonable chance, of possessing power to accomplish our design. Some cases are clear, where there is plainly power or want of power to execute plans. Others are doubtful. Yet a course of conduct may sometimes be justified, where there is neither a moral certainty nor a probability, but only a chance more or less favourable, that we shall accomplish our purposes. "Numberless instances (observes Butler) might be mentioned, respecting the common pursuits of life, where a man would be thought in a literal sense distracted, who would not act, and with great application too, not only upon an even chance, but upon much less, and where the probability or chance was greatly against his succeeding." It must however of course be implied, that there is some possible combination of future

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in your general prayers, whereby you offer yourself and all you do to God's glory." In this general care you will take account of your necessary recreations: thus they will be distinguished from the sportive gambols of the lower animals. But while you caress, you also encourage a child who is the object of your affection: while you give vent to this affection, you shew him the bond of kindness by which mankind is united.

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circumstances under which we may succeed, *i.e.* that there is or may be a power whereby what we endeavour to accomplish may turn out and come to pass. Otherwise, to proceed in our undertaking is clearly unreasonable: and since reason is God's light within us, whereby to guide our conduct, there is on this account a moral delinquency if we do proceed.

As it is our duty to exercise our reasoning powers, to apply the means given for the guidance of our path, it is therefore assuredly our business to take care that the thing aimed at be worth the price paid for it.* Estimate, if you please, its value if attained, and the probability of attainment. Consider also the sacrifices to be made, the difficulties to be encountered, the labours to be undergone in the pursuit. Judge

* One great fault in undisciplined minds seems to be the entertainment of exaggerated notions respecting the value of objects proposed to them; which accordingly they pursue with the most vehement ardour and impetuosity, and in the pursuit often sacrifice health, character, fortune, things of real, though it be granted not of greatest value. "Our vices (as has been before quoted from Jeremy Taylor) are in love with fantastic pleasures and images of perfection:" whereas there is, in fact, no such perfection in any temporal object which we can propose to ourselves. No pursuit, referring to merely temporal objects, is worthy of the highest love, the undivided attention, the entire mind of man created in the image of God. Such devotion on man's part is in truth idolatry.

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too whether it be morally certain, or probable, or only possible, or not very improbable, that there really will be these sacrifices, difficulties, and labours. The decision of such questions is often involved in the greatest intricacy and perplexity. Be it recollected however that in carrying out your thoughts to a conclusion, you must not be limited by any mean and narrow views of expediency: but it behoves you to judge, whether the contemplated course of action is altogether suitable to your position and circumstances, and such as God your Lord and Master will probably approve: indeed, until you are convinced on this point, it will be premature in you to call it on the whole good.

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CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

We will now conclude this part of our subject with a few reflections on what has been adduced.

In the first place, it will have been observed, in what a remarkable manner the considerations of highly probable evidence are connected with the primary principles of natural and revealed religion.

1. The mind of man is convinced by experience, that a necessity compels him to admit this highly probable evidence as his guide in the common affairs of life: moreover he perceives that he thus ordinarily obtains his object, truth.

2. Hence his mind being prepared and trained, he more readily admits this kind of evidence with reference to the existence and attributes of the Deity, and his own relation to God as his Creator, Preserver, Lawgiver: and his conviction of the truth of these elements of natural religion is strengthened and matured.

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3. He is now led to conclude, that in matters concerning human conduct it is right as well as necessary to admit this highly probable evidence: and his belief is confirmed that he shall thus ordinarily obtain truth; for to receive such evidence is to obey the law of God, a God of truth.

4. Thus armed, he proceeds to the consideration of revealed religion; and appreciating both the intrinsic weight of the evidence, and the importance of the subject-matter, he willingly receives what is proposed as truth.

5. Having admitted revelation, and obtained definite ideas of the extent of human responsibility, he again recurs to the law of highly probable evidence; and being assured that God has not only enacted, but that He vindicates and supports this law among other laws by a system of rewards and punishments, he finds a sense of its importance still more deeply impressed upon his mind.

6. The propriety of obeying this law then is altogether manifest. For, to sum up what has been said, obedience is necessary, right, expedient.

On the whole therefore, as man has perpetually to act, it is plainly his constant business to discover what is more or less like truth; and from the likeness to infer that he has obtained the

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thing itself, *i.e.* truth. The inference is in one case an easy step, which the mind is ready without hesitation to take: in another a wide and deep chasm intervenes, which is to be overleapt, and yet not without reluctance and difficulty. The similitude of truth, presenting innumerable degrees of likeness, is to truth itself as a mathematical curve, which continually approaches but never reaches its asymptote. And in regard both to justice and goodness, we treasure in our minds abstract ideas of these principles, but we can never, on any given occasion, assert, with philosophical strictness, more than that we have perceived what *appears* to be just or good. For, at least, certain facts or circumstances must be obtained as preliminary to our considerations of what is just or good. Thus the judge assumes the guilt of the prisoner before he proceeds to punishment. Admit then, if you please, that if the offence has been committed, the sentence is most just; still, if you have only probable evidence of guilt, you have but the same that justice is done. But even if the accused is certainly guilty, the judge as a man may err, or the legislature as fallible may have assigned an undue amount of punishment. Observations to the same effect may be made in regard to what *appears* good.* Such

* See above, p. 135.

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is man's condition, such the limitation of his faculties.

The human mind, however, is naturally inquisitive; it thirsts to know. In mathematical reasonings it seems to approach so nearly to the grasp of the truth it covets, that the questions have sometimes been asked, Whether when confined to these studies the mind is not perhaps too apt to require similarly cogent proof of other truths presented for its reception? Whether men are not thus sometimes led into error, by refusing to admit what, by the law of highly probable evidence, they are bound to acknowledge? Whether in truth they fully appreciate that law, and are duly contented with what God has given to man?*

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* A critic in the *Quarterly*, reviewing the autobiography of Bishop Watson, writes thus: We begin with a very remarkable passage, which strikingly corroborates an observation of Warburton, that long addiction to mathematical pursuits incapacitates the mind from weighing the various degrees of moral proof: "I was early in life accustomed to mathematical discussion, and the certainty attending it; and not meeting with that certainty in the science of metaphysics, of natural and revealed religion, I have an habitual tendency to hesitation in judgment, rather than to a peremptory judgment on many points."

"To expect a produce of wheat from the seed and cultivation of barley, or the fruit of the olive-tree from the plant and culture of the vine, would, in common life, be marked as an absurdity akin to madness. So to suppose that truths from

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It has been asserted by persons to whom these questions have perhaps occurred, and who have at all events rightly disapproved of the demands of a mind unsatisfied with moral proof, that it seems a more holy and proper thing for men to believe than to know the secrets of divine truth. In regard to all this it may seem sufficient to remark, that the state of man is what it is. Had the question been considered of endowing man with higher powers of investigating and appreciating truth; surely we cannot pretend *a priori* to judge whether such a course would or would not have been consistent with the character of the Creator, with the accomplishment of the objects which it was proper to contemplate, with the obstacles and difficulties interposed. We are ignorant of the state of the case, and therefore on this ground alone it would be presumptuous in us to pretend to judge on such a question. But, on the other hand, it behoves us to endeavour truly to estimate the position and cir-

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different principles, and deduced in a different way will result the same, will shine with an equal degree of brightness, or be attended with the same measure of conviction, involves an absurdity equally great, though perhaps not quite so glaring. Yet whilst the former is an absurdity, of which the peasant is utterly incapable, the latter has too often disgraced the philosopher or theologist."—Tatham's Bampton Lectures.

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cumstances in which we are placed. If the law of probable evidence is really given by God to men, His subjects, it will be our wisdom as well as our duty, not to waste our time and talents in fanciful speculations upon matters respecting which we are necessarily incompetent judges; but to apply ourselves to the fulfilment of that which we are appointed to fulfil in the manner ordained by the Lawgiver. If this highly probable evidence ordinarily leads to truth,* and is sufficient for our guidance, as it assuredly is, and experience perpetually shews us, no just ground of complaint can lie against the Creator. He has given us what He has given. As to say, that had it pleased Him He could not have given more, would seem beyond our powers of judging; so to repine or murmur as if He had treated us harshly, would imply something worse than judging without evidence, viz. the judging against it.†

* In regard even to what is called Demonstrative Evidence, a pious mind may recollect that our faculties are but those of created and dependent beings. We still trust that our Creator and Protector would not allow us to be deceived by evidence which it is physically impossible for us not to receive. With respect to moral evidence, we trust that the Moral Governor of the universe would not allow His subjects to be deceived by evidence, which it is impossible for them as moral agents not to receive.

† In regard to all this, see Butler's Analogy.

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We read in Scripture of "the trial of our faith."* Why God should place man in a state of trial, we are not fully informed.† Still the thing has been done, and therefore was certainly proper. But it being granted that it was fit so to place man, it is plain that the very difficulties by which he is perplexed constitute a trial. If evidence was so overpowering that it irresistibly compelled conviction, men's trial would be different from what it is. Here then we have the key to an answer which, among others, should be made to the unbeliever mentioned by Paley, who said that if God had given a revelation to man, He would have written it in the skies.

Great principles connected with man's conduct and recognised in Scripture, are faith, hope, and charity.‡ When we believe that things have been, are, will be, love and hope are the powers that move us to action. We are convinced that God really has done, does, and will do those things, of which the evidence is before us. Therefore we love Him, and hope to enjoy the fulfilment of His promises. Accordingly we obey Him. Scripture, in recognising these first ele-

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* 1 Pet. i. 7.

† See below, Book iv. chap. vi.: also Butler's Analogy.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

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ments, admits what is implanted in the very nature of man. Long before the advent of our Saviour, these principles continually operated, though their objects might be innumerable and merely temporal. They operate now among the natives of Africa, who never heard the name of Christ. The savage is perpetually moved by love and hope; and what does he love and hope for, but things which he believes do or may exist?

The matters, therefore, which have been the subject of our discussion, have a general connection with all the affairs of men, of every age and country, both in respect to the present life and that which is to come.

In God all truth, justice, goodness dwell. He accordingly, at all times, perceives things as they are, certainly true or certainly false, just or unjust, good or evil. In the image of God man was created. The tendency of sin has been to destroy that resemblance: power however is given for restoration and recovery. The good and evil principles still conflict; and therefore the likeness, more or less vivid, yet remains. Accordingly we obtain images of what is true, just, and good. Our boundaries, nevertheless, are assigned us; and the creature, as might be expected, remains immeasurably inferior to his great Creator.

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In Holy Writ we have frequent examples of the feeling of reverential awe with which men regarded the majesty of the Almighty; and thus the idea is often expressed, that having seen God a man would die.* After the communications vouchsafed by the Almighty to Moses, the countenance of the prophet was so glorious, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold his face, which he was therefore obliged to veil.† But though God had spoken unto him as a man speaketh unto his friend, and the prophet was therefore emboldened to ask that he might see His glory; still this very Moses was told that no man could see Him and live.‡ Let us then, who, like the Israelites guided by the pillar of fire, are but strangers and pilgrims journeying to our true country, though guided indeed by supernatural light, cheerfully acquiesce in the laws of our present condition. Hereafter it may be granted to us "to see Him as He is,"‖ "face to face,"§ "to know even as we are known." Meantime let us remember, that though what it has been proper to withhold from us has been withheld, still much has been freely given: let

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* Exod. xx. 19; xxxiii. 20. Judg. xiii. 22.
† 2 Cor. iii. ‡ Exod. xxxiii.
‖ 1 John iii. 2. § 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

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us reverently, and at a distance, admire the bright perfections of the Deity, and adore Him—

> The Author of all being,
> Fountain of light, Himself invisible,
> Amidst the glorious brightness, where He sits
> Throned inaccessible.
>
> PARADISE LOST, III. 377.

THE END OF BOOK II.

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BOOK III.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE INSTINCTIVE MOVING PRINCIPLES OF MAN, AS CONNECTED WITH OUR SUBJECT.

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CHAPTER I.

THE CONCLUSIONS HERETOFORE OBTAINED NOT TO BE SHAKEN BY THE POWER OF THE INSTINCTIVE MOVING PRINCIPLES. THE HIGHER PARTS OF OUR NATURE DESIGNED TO GOVERN THE LOWER.

THUS far our inquirer has been mainly occupied in considering what may be termed the higher part of man's nature; and has arrived at conclusions from which we trust he will not be shaken. He has likewise admitted what we may call instinctive moving principles, love and hope, recognised in Scripture, and naturally holding a place in the human heart. He has allowed too, that if for no other reason than to assist man's weakness, particular maxims ought to be treasured up in his mind; and approving and loving such maxims, he will again be moved as it were instinctively to action.

It would not indeed be difficult to imagine a being of strong and resolute mind, who might, at all times and under all circumstances, clearly perceive what was true and right, and at once

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act comformably. This however does not seem suitable to our ideas of a created and dependent, much less a fallen being. It is certainly not the state of man.

It is possible too to conceive a creature, of whom what has been prominently exhibited in our former books might be the characteristic features, and nothing more. Such however is not our condition.

Our inquirer then having not yet taken a sufficient survey of his position, it will behove him still more accurately to look around. At the commencement of his investigation, he had smarted from pain and betaken himself to abstract meditation. Hence he had been well-nigh disposed, if possible, wholly to eject the moving principles from which, not having duly regulated them, he had suffered. But the remedy would have been stronger than the disease needed. Men do not altogether quench fire because houses and even towns have sometimes been burnt: water is useful, though floods have desolated whole districts. Moreover even Scripture has shewn that love and hope must be admitted. Hunger and thirst at least we cannot expel; which are recognised too in Scripture, as well as the other appetite common to man and the brutes. But the Apostle also tells us to "rejoice

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with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep."* At the tomb of Lazarus "Jesus wept."† St. Paul writes, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death."‡ On one occasion Jesus looked round about upon the by-standers "with anger, being grieved for the heardness of their hearts."‖ So "Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."§ Though we are told that "perfect love casteth out fear,"¶ still our Saviour bids us "fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell."** Again, if we are to propose to ourselves good objects, and pray for their accomplishment, how can we but desire them? Desire indeed is included in our notions of love and hope. We have likewise continual warnings against pride, hatred, envy, revenge. Scripture too being addressed to men, and claiming authority to exercise power in their hearts, and a part of the evidence which supports it being its suitableness to the nature of men, it would indeed be strange if it did not take account of these emotions; which, as our

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* Rom. xii. 15. † John xi. 35. ‡ 2 Cor. vi. 10.
‖ Mark. iii. 5. § Eph. iv. 26. ¶ 1 John iv. 18.
** Luke xii. 9.

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own observation and experience teach us, find a place in the human heart.*

Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.†

Again,

Naturam expelles furcâ, tamen usque recurret.‡

Here is the man still retaining his susceptibility of emotions: he is surrounded by objects which continually solicit them: and if it was desirable, the question would nevertheless occur, how far it was possible, as it were, to sear his heart.

On the whole therefore we conclude, that numerous instinctive moving principles he must have. The entire class then claims his attention: and the question arises, In what way to deal with them? Are they all indiscriminately to dwell within him? If not all, which? Again, to what objects are they to be directed? With what force, and to what extent, are they to operate?

We have already turned our attention to particular moving principles mentioned in Scripture. From Dugald Stewart we may obtain the fol-

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* Even God, though without body, parts, or passions, has been pleased (in condescension to man's weakness) to allow Himself to be represented as influenced by human emotions. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." "It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth; and it grieved Him at His heart."

† Terence. ‡ Hor. Epist. I. 10, 24.

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lowing catalogue of what he terms "our instinctive principles of action."

1. The Appetites: hunger, thirst, that by which the species is continued.

2. The Desires: the desire of knowledge, the desire of society, the desire of esteem, the desire of power,* emulation or the desire of superiority.†

3. The Affections: the affections of kindred, of friendship, of patriotism, of pity to the distressed, of resentment.

To the Desires, Abercrombie adds the desire of action, "that restless activity of mind, which leads it to require some object on which its powers must be exercised, and without which it preys upon itself and becomes miserable." (See pp. 5, 144).

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* Avarice (he says) is a particular modification of the desire of power.

† In regard to envy, "He who runs a race (writes Reid) feels uneasiness at seeing another outstrip him.....But this uneasiness may produce one of two very different effects. It may incite him to make more vigorous exertions, and to strain every nerve to get before his rival. This is fair and honest emulation.....But if he has not fairness and candour of heart, he will look with an evil eye on his competitor, and will endeavour to trip him or throw a stumbling-block in his way. This is pure envy, the most malignant passion that can lodge in the human breast."

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"Self-love, (says Butler) and interestedness consists in an affection to ourselves, a regard to our own private good: it is distinct from benevolence, which is an affection to the good of our fellow-creatures."

Speaking of affection in general, "The excess (he writes,) since it cannot procure enjoyment, must in all cases be useless; but it is generally attended with inconvenience, and often is downright pain and misery. This holds as much with regard to self-love as to all other affections. The natural degree of it.....may be to our real advantage." But "private interest is so far from being likely to be promoted in proportion to the degree in which self-love engrosses us and prevails over all other principles, that the contracted affection may be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and even contradict its own end, private good."*

* However "it is manifest," he says, "that self-love is in human nature a superior principle to passion. This may be contradicted without violating that nature, but the former cannot."

According to Stewart, "It is implied in the very idea of happiness, that it is a desirable object; and therefore self-love is an active principle, very different from those which have been hitherto considered.....The desire of happiness may be called a *rational* principle of action, being peculiar to a rational nature, and inseparably connected with it. It is impos-

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The existence of the Affections and Desires classified by Stewart and Abercrombie seems to

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sible to conceive a being, capable of forming the notions of happiness and misery, to whom the one shall not be an object of desire, and the other of aversion."

To use proper means tending to the accomplishment of what appears on the whole good for ourselves or for others, is a right application of the principles of self-love or benevolence. Such conduct, when sanctified by a sense of religion, is, as has been shewn above, altogether suitable to our position.

Whether we shall obtain the good we desire, is sometimes doubtful.

A learned writer has remarked, that the greater part of mankind can never attain such extensive views of human life, and so correct a judgment of good and ill, as the right application of the principle of Expediency requires.

What then will be the effect of this principle, when used in a narrow sense (see above, p. 156), and unchastised by considerations of propriety and religion?

There may be different shades of the narrow meaning. Still even in a confined sense it is perhaps "less mischievous than the extravagances of mere appetite, will, and pleasure."

It has been justly observed, that a regard for our good on the whole, can neither give a noble elevation to the mind that possesses it, nor attract the esteem and love of others. "Our cordial love and esteem (continues Reid) is due only to the man whose soul is not contracted within itself, who loves virtue not for her dowry only, but for her own sake." "Disinterested goodness and rectitude is the glory of the Divine nature, without which He might be an object of fear and hope, but not of true devotion. And it is the image of this Divine attribute in the human character that is the glory of man." Again, "A concern for our own good is not a principle that of itself gives any njoyment. On the contrary, it is apt to

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be directly or indirectly recognised in Scripture. Those writers mainly point out objects to which the emotions are directed, the objects being such as seem to be recognised by the generality of mankind. But men not only love persons, and desire power, esteem, superiority, but they also love such principles as veracity, justice, benevolence.* They begin by esteeming them; and "Truth (says Reid) has an affinity with the human understanding, which error hath not. And right principles of conduct have an affinity with a candid mind, which wrong have not. When they are set before it in a just light, a well-disposed mind recognises this affinity, feels their authority, and perceives them to be gen-

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fill the mind with fear and care and anxiety." But "he who leaves the care of his happiness to Him who made him, while he pursues with ardour the road of his duty," experiences "an elevation of mind which is real happiness. Instead of care and fear and anxiety and disappointment," he feels peace and joy.

The sum is this: "Although a regard to our good on the whole be a rational principle in man, yet if it be supposed the only regulating principle of our conduct, it would be a more uncertain rule, it would give far less perfection to the human character and far less happiness, than when joined with another rational principle, to wit, a regard to duty."

St. Paul says, "Now abide faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

* See the Preface.

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uine." It thus proceeds to love them. The mere beauty, as it has been called, of Virtue excites agreeable feelings in the mind of him to whom it is presented;* just as the deformity of Vice is disagreeable: he hates† it and shrinks from it.

Accordingly, as Stewart tells us, "it is impossible to behold a good action without being conscious of a benevolent affection, either of love or of respect towards the agent: and consequently, as all our benevolent affections include an agreeable feeling, every good action must be a source of pleasure to the spectator. Besides this, other agreeable feelings of order, of utility, of peace of mind, &c. come in process of time to be associated with the general idea of virtuous conduct."

These moral emotions then are moving principles in our minds. The emotion just mentioned by Stewart, of love or respect, might, no doubt, prompt us to action.‡

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* Magne pates Divûm, sævos punire tyrannos
Haud aliâ ratione velis.....
Virtutem videant, intabescantque relictâ. PERS. III.

† To hate evil principles and actions seems indeed the proper application of the feeling of hatred.

‡ Some years ago an enormous crime, that of murder in order to obtain bodies for dissection, was perpetrated in

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So when we have stored up in our minds such maxims as have been heretofore considered, (see Book II. c. vi.) agreeable to truth, justice, and benevolence, we gradually proceed to love them. This love may frequently impel us to action. Though originally therefore they had no place in the mind, and some of them at least may be almost peculiar to ourselves, and accordingly they can hardly be called *naturally* instinctive; still the love of them has become settled in our hearts, and such love may therefore now be considered to operate as an instinctive principle of action.

But to whatever degree of nicety distinctions may be drawn, and classifications accomplished, an elaborate and minute analysis is not suitable to our general design; and it is at all events undeniable that there are such things as instinctive moving principles. God however added higher faculties. Supreme in the human mind is the power by which man determines the con-

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our metropolis: the populace were so indignant, that in their fury they hunted an unfortunate porter (who had ignorantly carried in a sack or box the body of one thus murdered) from street to street, until he was at length with difficulty rescued from their violence. Here probably was a moral emotion, a hatred of an evil principle, joined perhaps with defensive affection. There was at least a blind impulse.

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duct proper to be pursued under any given circumstances,—that power indeed by which he duly appreciates moral evidence. Present such evidence to one of the inferior animals, and you do what, by the common voice of mankind, is pronounced no less absurd than if you ask the blind to judge of colours, or the deaf of sounds; for a brute has no faculty whereby to estimate what is proposed. The power by which man is indeed elevated in the scale of creation, is termed the Conscience, the Moral Faculty, in Scripture the Light within us.* As far as the design of this treatise is concerned, it seems unnecessary to determine "whether, in the words of Butler, the moral faculty is" rightly "called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a perception of the understanding, or as a sentiment of the heart, or, which seems the truth, as including both."† According to Reid, "Those who differ most in the theory of our moral powers, agree in the practical rules of morals wich they dictate. As a man may be a good judge of colours, and of the visible qualities of objects, without any knowledge of the anatomy of the eye and of the theory of vision; so a man may have a very

* Matth. vi. 23. † See the Preface.

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clear and comprehensive knowledge of what is right and what is wrong in human conduct, who never studied the structure of our moral powers." At all events conscience, be its essence what it may, is the judge of moral truth. Whatever assistance it may derive from the other powers of man, or in what manner soever they may be included in the notion of the moral faculty, it is assuredly the province of this faculty to judge both of internal principles and of outward actions, and ultimately to determine conduct.

The moral faculty, and the intellectual powers which so constitute it or assist it, or rather which are so included in it,* that on the whole the operations result and are displayed of a power authorized to govern, we may call the Higher Faculties of man. The instinctive moving principles which have heretofore been considered, may in contradistinction be termed the Lower Principles of our nature.

Now before a man acts, his will must be moved to action.

It has already virtually been affirmed, that the office of the higher faculties is to govern the will, and so to guide the man.

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* See Butler, as quoted in the last page.

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But these lower principles, some of them possessing and others strongly claiming an abode in our hearts, do frequently with more or less power act upon the will, sometimes singly, at others aiding and abetting, or modifying and controlling each other: and therefore they have in fact a tendency, stronger or weaker, to govern the will, and thus to guide the man.

So that our inquirer's question, How to deal with them? naturally includes reflections upon government, since there is or may be even a contest in regard to government.

The consideration of this subject will furnish various illustrations tending to throw light upon the main design of our speculations, and to assist us in the appreciation of moral evidence. Again the conclusions to be obtained may, we trust, be themselves useful in regard to conduct and in supplying a fuller answer to the question, What am I to do as a man placed in the world? Moreover the consideration of the lower principles of our nature is peculiarly connected with the undertaking we have in hand; for, unless controlled by systematic discipline, they tend to disturb and blind the moral faculty itself.

Our inquirer, before he had duly surveyed and estimated the powers and the claims of the lower principles, had in reality acknowledged

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the supreme authority of the higher faculties: but his attention being now directed to a closer examination of the former, it shall be my endeavour to shew that the conclusions which he had at first obtained, are not to be shaken by the truths which he has subsequently been obliged to admit: the conscience is still to be supreme: the appetites, desires, and affections are inferior in nature and in kind: and it is manifestly the law of the Creator that they should be regulated and controlled by the higher faculties.

For, in the first place, though there may be difficulties in instituting comparisons, still it is pretty clear that the higher faculties possess a worth, and challenge an admiration which the lower principles do not. In regard to appetite and affection, the example of the brutes may assist us in appreciating the effect of such impulses when unrestrained or unmitigated by higher faculties. In the lower animals indeed they accomplish good and wise purposes, and in men their operation when duly regulated is good. Nevertheless it is the truth that they urge both brutes and men who act like brutes, headlong to their object, reckless of consequences, and intent only on gratifying the predominant, and it may be momentary stimulus. Thus power is crippled,

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energies are wasted; good is despised, evil loved; right trampled, wrong embraced.*

But turning our attention to the higher faculties, we find that the intellectual powers are not confined as those of the body to a narrow space, a point of time, and objects close at hand: on the contrary, they expatiate at pleasure in the contemplation of matters connected with every country in the globe, nay more, discover the paths of the planets, and, by inference, acknowledge the immeasurable distance of the fixed stars. By the powers of our minds are understood the sciences of arithmetic and geometry, the conditions of equilibrium, and the motions of bodies; the laws of light; the knowledge of plants, and insects, and birds, and beasts, and fishes; the delicate mechanism of the human body; the nature of diseases and their remedies; the chemical relations of substances; the principles of political science and legislation; moral philosophy, and the abstruse speculations of metaphysics. Again, particular inventions, of which the effects upon human society are incalculable, have originated of course in the intellect of man. Among these the arts of ship-building, of printing, of making gunpowder, of applying steam, are eminently conspicuous. Moreover our

* See Rom. i. 32, "have pleasure in them that do them."

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mental powers enable us to grasp the records of past ages, and to glean wisdom from the errors and follies as well as the learning and virtue of our forerunners in the race of life. Accordingly Homer, Plato, Cicero, Juvenal, Bacon, Newton, Shakspeare, Milton, whom we have neither seen nor ever had the power of seeing, instruct our minds. They "being dead yet speak."

In all circumstances however in which we are concerned to act, the study of intellectual truth supplies facts and circumstances preparatory to such action. The moral faculty judges of the sufficiency of the evidence by which the facts and circumstances are supported, and so proceeds to determine conduct. As far as our limited powers will allow, we contemplate not only the past and the present, but also the future. Thus the magnitude, the duration, the probability of attainment of such things as are proposed for our choice being shewn to our minds, the moral faculty bids us select the right and good, reject the wrong and evil.

But, more than this, the moral faculty even checks and chastises powers which are merely intellectual. It corrects the roving imagination, expels improper thoughts, and debars us from knowledge which we cannot modestly obtain. It condemns frivolous, much more wicked appli-

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cations of the intellect: and though "the devils believe and tremble," yet notwithstanding their intellect, being destitute of this moral faculty or not applying it, they continue still the same.

Thus on the whole the moral faculty uses and yet restrains the intellectual powers. If the latter are admirable, what is the former?

But it seems unnecessary to proceed in pointing out distinctions. The intellectual and moral powers are at least so intimately connected, that it may seem almost harsh to consider them as separate. In fact, though you may contemplate the intellectual powers abstractedly from the moral,* one does not see how it is possible to contemplate the operations of the moral faculty abstractedly from those of the intellect; without which it seems powerless.† Suffice it therefore to remark, that by these higher faculties man being convinced of the existence and attributes of the Deity, is invited as a petitioner to communicate his wants, and prays in spirit to the invisible Spirit, Who has promised to hear the prayers of those who ask in His Son's Name.

* Thus for instance we see that things have been, are, will be, without any necessary reference to propriety of conduct. See Book I. Chap. 2.

† The knowledge of what is proper to be done implies the knowledge that certain things have been, are, or will be.

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Again, he lauds and magnifies the great Creator of those things whereof science teaches him the knowledge; and this too not only "with his lips but in his life," *i.e.* in his actions. For rejecting the evil and choosing the good, he continually carries out the designs, and so acts to the glory of God. As he is intellectual and moral, he approaches even to the likeness of God. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him."‡ Now though man has fallen, and even if restored must still be infinitely inferior to his Maker; it ought nevertheless to be the study of our lives to improve this resemblance. The more nearly we approach to the pattern, the more near are we to the attainment of that perfection of human nature which is the object of our efforts. As we are enlightened and purified, *i. e.* as the intellectual and moral powers are improved, as we continually imbue our minds with eternal principles of truth, justice, gratitude, benevolence, wisdom, knowledge, this likeness is increased and established. Finally, "when He shall appear we shall be like

‡ Gen. i. 27. See South's sermon on this subject: "In other creatures we have but the trace of God's footstep, in man the draught of His hand.... We might well imagine that the great Artificer would be more than ordinarily exact in drawing His own picture."

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Him: for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure."*

The argument by which Butler shews the superiority in nature and in kind of the higher faculties is briefly this: You may act agreeably to the whole nature of man, even if in opposition to any of the lower principles; but you cannot act thus agreeably to your nature, if in opposition to the conscience.†

On the whole, then, philosophers have been accustomed to consider the intellectual and moral powers, in opposition to instinctive moving principles, as essentially the worthier and nobler parts of men:‡ the definition given above was

* 1 John iii. 2, 3.

† It is of course understood that in exalting the intellectual and moral powers of man, we forget not his perpetual need of spiritual assistance; for "it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil. ii. 13. (See below Book IV. Chap. 4.) God has given us many gifts, of which the crown and consummation is that of the Spirit. In contemplating man as a sensitive, intellectual moral, and religious being, it is perhaps worthy of remark, that his intellectual powers require the assistance of the senses, his moral that of the intellect, while religion offers itself to him as sensitive, intellectual, and moral, and presupposes these qualifications. We seem thus gradually to ascend in our considerations from the characteristic traits of brutes to the sanctifying operations of the Spirit.

‡ It is easy to conceive that one principle may possess

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no arbitrary one; and the former are with propriety termed the higher faculties, the latter the lower principles of our nature.

Now it is manifestly agreeable to God's will that the higher faculties should regulate and govern the lower propensities; for it is fit and proper they should, and they are worthy thus to rule.* We naturally acknowledge certain principles of moral rectitude, and hence we infer that God who thus framed us does Himself recognise the same. Again, His attributes are distinctly asserted in Scripture; and though, in this imperfect state of being, obstacles may intervene to prevent what is right from being fully carried out, still His character remains immutably the same. Whatever is just and right then, that He approves. Now it is just that the worthier should preside over and govern what is less worthy.

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a native dignity greater than that of another, though both be stamped with the seal of the Deity; just as one animal may be naturally superior to another: "Are not ye much better than they?" (Matth. vi. 26). In all cases this higher dignity claims our higher admiration; and such admiration, when genuine and sincere, is a proof of the dignity.

* "What more proper entertainments can our mind have than to be purifying and beautifying itself, to be keeping itself and its subordinate faculties in order, to be attending upon the management of thoughts, of passions, of words, of actions depending upon its governance?"—Barrow's Sermons.

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Accordingly our observation of the whole economy of nature, *i. e.* of the arrangements of the Deity who has appointed this economy, teaches us that, in general, what is essentially higher does predominate over, control, and direct that which is lower. Thus mental power prevails over and governs mere bodily strength. In the scale of human society the wise and learned rise, the ignorant and illiterate sink. One man by his talents sways even multitudes of his fellow-men:

> Ac veluti magno in populo cum sæpe coorta est
> Seditio, sævitque animis ignobile vulgus.
> Jamque faces et saxa volant: furor arma ministrat.
> Tum pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem
> Conspexere, silent arrectisque auribus astant.
> Ille regit dictis animos, et pectora mulcet.
>
> ÆN. I. 152.

Much more then do men exercise power over the lower creatures. We protect ourselves against their ferocity and strength. We tame them, and apply their powers. We make elephants and horses carry us; dogs scent out and pursue our game; leeches draw our blood. But especially where closer degrees of juxta-position and union are established, is this principle (*i. e.* of what is naturally higher presiding over and ruling what is lower) more clearly and conspicuously developed. This indeed is what we should expect, for proximity and union require, and indeed

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imply government; and which is to govern, if not the worthier and fitter? Take as an example the close and intimate union which subsists between members of the same family. The intelligence of children is not yet fully developed; their experience is very limited, and they are sometimes perverse and stubborn. In order that the proceedings of the family may be carried on harmoniously and reasonably, it is ordained that there should be both a duty of government and of obedience. "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* "Children, obey pour parents."† This is altogether suitable to the circumstances of the case; for the parents are naturally wiser and superior. But, to pursue our argument, what can be more close and intimate than the juxtaposition and connexion between the higher faculties and the lower propensities in one and the same man? In acting he must act in subjection to the higher or the lower part of his nature, or it may be to both. But if these two conflict (and experience shews us that contests will and must arise), is it not clear to which the Creator designed him to pay allegiance, by rendering one intrinsically superior to the other?

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* Eph. vi. 4.

† Coloss. iii. 20.

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But further, say that men do degrade themselves and blindly indulge their instinctive propensities; does not experience shew what even in this world is usually the issue? See how immoderate indulgence of the appetites, gluttony, drunkenness, unchastity, lead to broken health and premature decay. How envy, revenge, malice, even excessive anger, to the infliction of pain, bloodshed, and murder. Thus men harass and torment men; retaliation perpetuates injuries; the bonds of social harmony are broken; the power and happiness of whole classes and nations are impaired or destroyed. Our own private experience of these truths is confirmed by the records of history. Look especially to the state of France during the Reign of Terror. Read again the accounts of Athenian and Lacedæmonian cruelty, as given by Thucydides at the time of the Peloponnesian war. And not only does this unbridled dominion of passion diminish or destroy the comforts and enjoyments of men, and inflict upon them pain and misery; but it also (as will hereafter more fully appear) degrades and vitiates their minds; so that the higher faculties themselves become impaired in consequence of their voluntary subjection. This is entirely consistent with the common course and constitution of nature, and agreeable to the

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dispensation under which we live. For if we do not duly use, or if we misuse the good things given to us, we may often perceive that their virtue and efficacy are diminished or destroyed. In the parable of the Talents* we see this principle implied throughout, and finally asserted in direct terms, "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

The mind then being thus prostrated, a dissolute and profligate, or a savage and revengeful spirit becomes characteristic of society. Children are trained in wrong notions from their earliest infancy; and so the evil becomes prolonged and perpetuated.

Thus then on the one hand bad effects arise from the predominance of the lower propensities. On the other hand it is manifest, that good consequences follow their operation when duly regulated: they assist our weakness; relieve us from langour and inertness; recal from what is wrong; stimulate in the path of duty. The appetites too serve important purposes connected with the preservation and continuation of the human race. In the words of Butler, "men have

* Matth. xxvi.

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various appetites, passions, and particular affections, quite distinct both from self-love and from benevolence: all these have a tendency to promote both public and private good.....Some of them seem most immediately to respect others or tend to public good, others of them most immediately to respect self or tend to private good..... They are instances of our Maker's care and love both of the individual and the species, and proofs that He intended we should be instruments of good to each other, as well as that we should be so to ourselves."* Accordingly these tendencies of the instinctive moving principles, bad when uncontrolled, good when moderated, may be taken as another proof that a benevolent Creator intended the higher parts of our nature to preside over the lower.

But the truth of the proposition appears also from Revelation. The whole spirit of Scripture shews it. The things enjoined cannot be ac-

* If a person eats, we may conceive him to obey the instinctive stimulus of hunger, to recognise the principle of self-love in doing what preserves his life, to act to the honour of God who intended that men should be sustained by food. (See 1 Cor. x. 31.) If a man designedly promotes the advantage of his neighbour, he may be moved by the instinctive principle desire of esteem, by mere benevolence, by a sense of religion and duty.

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complished without this discipline and government. If I am to give alms as a cheerful giver* to my poor neighbour, I cannot do it if under the dominion of covetousness. If I am to be patient and resigned under all the dispensations of Providence, to take up my cross, and follow Christ whithersoever He leads me; a mind pampered by indulgence and luxurious ease, by a habit of facile concession to the appetites and affections, will be but ill trained for such sacrifice and self-denial. Again, if I am to cherish and cultivate a general benevolence to all men, how can I permit envy, malice, revenge, altogether inconsistent with such good-will, to dwell in my heart? Not only by implication however does Scripture teach us the duty of controlling the lower propensities, but there are also direct injunctions on the subject: "Dearly beloved, (says St. Paul) avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath:"† "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the

* "God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. ix. 7.

† Rom xii. 19.

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which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."* "No covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."† "These six things doth the Lord hate; yea seven are an abomination unto Him: a *proud* look," &c.‡ "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination unto the Lord."‖

Such is a very small portion indeed of the confirmation afforded by Scripture.§

On the whole then, from considerations of the original principle, viz. the essential superiority of the higher faculties to the lower propensities; from the evil effects that follow a blind indulgence of the latter, and the good arising from their agency when duly regulated and governed;

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* Gal. v. 19–21.

† Eph. v. 5.

‡ Prov. vi. 16, 17.

‖ Prov. xvi. 5.

§ Persons are at times apt to allege, that some particular instinctive principle is so strong within them that they cannot control it. But the questions arise: Is it so? Are they not deceiving themselves? Have they earnestly prayed for the assistance of Divine grace? (see below, Book IV. chap. 4.) Have they been sincere, zealous, watchful, persevering in their endeavours? Have they tried to obtain a habit of resistance? If God intended us to adopt certain principles of conduct, there can be no doubt that power to carry them out, in such manner as may be acceptable in His sight, either exists, or by diligence may be attained.

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and also from the general tenor and tendency, as well as the express injunctions of Scripture, we are justified in concluding that the Lawgiver, a God of order, justice, goodness, intended the higher* to preside over the lower parts of our nature.

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* Butler says: "There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart as well as his external actions: which passes judgment upon himself and them: pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust: which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly." Again: "the principle of reflection or conscience being compared with the various appetites, passions, and affections in men, the former is manifestly superior and chief, without regard to strength. And how often soever the latter happen to prevail, it is mere *usurpation*." Also, "you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea, that is of the faculty itself: and to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength as it had right, had it power as it had manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world."

So "conscience carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide, the guide assigned us by the Author of our nature."

We have before seen what he says in regard to self-love, (note p. 184). Applying the same argument to assert the superiority of conscience, and uniting them together, "Reasonable self-love (he observes) and conscience are the chief or

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superior principles in the nature of man: because an action may be suitable to this nature, though all other principles be violated, but becomes unsuitable if either of those are." Throughout this treatise our inquirer, it will be recollected, having shaken off the tyranny of passion, has been engaged in considerations of his happiness and his duty.

Smith, as quoted by Stewart, observes: "The moral faculties carry with them the most evident badges of their own authority, which denote that they were set up within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our actions; to superintend all our senses, passions, and appetites; and to judge how far each of them was to be either indulged or restrained. Our moral faculties are by no means, as some have pretended, upon a level in this respect with the other faculties and appetites of our nature, endowed with no more right to restrain these last, than these last are to restrain them. No other faculty or principle of action judges of any other. Love does not judge of resentment, nor resentment of love." As from our observation of the powers of the eye and the ear we infer that they were intended to see and to hear, so we conclude that the conscience which judges was intended to judge.

Reid even explicitly declares, "The authority of conscience over the other active principles of the mind, I do not consider as a point that requires proof by argument, but as self-evident." At all events we may consider that such authority is now fully acknowledged by our inquirer.

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CHAPTER II.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE MANNER OF DEALING WITH THE INSTINCTIVE MOVING PRINCIPLES. CERTAIN TRAITS IN THEIR CHARACTER AND HABITS.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew we read of a centurion, a man under authority, who having soldiers subject to him, was accustomed to say to this man, Go, and he went; and to another, Come, and he came; and to his servant, Do this, and he did it. The centurion therefore, comprehending the nature of government, and knowing what miracles had been performed by Christ, inferred that a power of government was in His hands; and that if He but spoke the word, his servant should be healed.* Accordingly, it is sometimes asked by those who like the centurion ascend to a consideration of the principles of government, How can any one command others who is not able to rule himself? On the other hand, if a man is able to rule others, it is pretty

* Matth. viii. 5, et seq.

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clear that he possesses an aptitude for government, and it may be well hoped that he has the power of governing himself.

The mental condition then of our inquirer, and his views with regard to the discipline of the instinctive moving principles, may I think be illustrated by reflections upon the position of the master of a large household; who, taking a review of the state thereof, purposes not indeed to break up his establishment, and dismiss his servants; but to make changes in his arrangements, and to obtain an improved tone in the character of his family.

With these ideas therefore he will proceed to examine the general conduct and the claims of a number of old servants, as well as the character and pretensions of various candidates for admission into his service; and judging with just authority and superior power, will determine what course of conduct is to be pursued.

No doubt, our householder has certain main objects to accomplish; to which, in the consideration of details, his mind has a constant reference: and he judges how far it is likely that his purposes will be carried out by the capacity and zeal of each individual servant. If he has already any old retainer of a perverse and malevolent disposition, he may perhaps dismiss him; and

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will certainly not receive any new candidate whose character is wholly opposed to the promotion of his own chief designs. It will be a matter of importance too to determine how much power shall be entrusted to every one, and of what nature shall be the responsibility; whether some shall be subordinate to others, and if so, to what degree.

The main objects then of our inquirer being such as have been previously represented, if the instinctive moving principles are to be considered as servants, they can only be so esteemed as they further these objects. If they neither promote nor hinder them, they are justly liable to be ejected as unprofitable, occupying time and place to no purpose. If they actually hinder them, they are of course still more resolutely to be expelled.* They are then but as fraudulent

* It may perhaps be objected to this idea of expulsion, If God has implanted instinctive moving principles, why should man eject them? But we are considering the case of one whose mind has been undisciplined, who may have indulged affections or desires fixed on improper objects, who is now sensible of his errors, and is applying a remedy.

In general, though God has made men susceptible of affection and desire, still they may fix their love on wrong objects. From such perverted love they ought of course to free themselves, though love rightly directed be right. The scriptural idea is that of crucifying bad feelings. "They

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enemies, seeking an abode in the heart of him whom they mean ultimately to injure or destroy. But in regard to the lower propensities that may with propriety be allowed, and of which the general character and tendency are approved, there is still necessity for the most serious consideration. The manner in which they are to be permitted to move, the intensity and the time* of their operation, their relation of subjection or superiority to each other, are all questions of high importance. In short, since it behoves our inquirer to govern,† *i. e.* to check, to make the

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that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal. v. 24.)

St. James warns us, "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.....But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of *his own* lust and enticed."

* If revenge follows just resentment, the revenge is nevertheless sinful. "Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." (Eph. iv. 26.) If a malevolent feeling is treasured up, it assumes a new character and is called by a different name:

Εἴπερ γάρ τε χόλον γε καὶ ἀντῆμαρ κατατέψῃ,
Ἀλλά γε καὶ μετόπισθεν ἔχει κότον.—Hom. Il. A.

† Butler, after the example of ancient philosophers, illustrates his idea of self-government by that of civil government: "Every bias, instinct, propension within, is a natural part of our nature, but not the whole: add to these the superior faculty whose office it is to adjust, manage, and preside over them; and take in this, its natural superiority, and you complete the idea of human nature. And as in civil government

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best use of his servants, to arbitrate between them, to take care that the power of one does not encroach upon what justly belongs to another; since indeed he has to act, he must, as a natural preliminary to action, judge.

Nevertheless the science of government in general involves great difficulties; and experience of the phenomena of our own minds, and observation of the conduct of other men, seem to shew that the discipline of the affections and desires is a task which requires especial attention. If by entering a little more into detail we can assist those who are engaged in the consideration of this duty, we shall be instrumental in promoting the accomplishment of a great object. "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."* Let us endeavour therefore more fully to explain our views, in regard to the manner of dealing with the lower propensities, by exhibiting some particular examples.

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the constitution is broken in upon and violated by power and strength prevailing over authority; so the constitution of man is broken in upon and violated by the lower faculties or principles within prevailing over that, which is in its nature supreme over them all." Again, "men *rebelliously* refuse to submit *to* conscience."

* Prov. xvi. 32.

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Take for instance one of the best and highest affections of our nature, the love of kindred, that of parents (suppose) for children, or children for parents. These feelings we acknowledge to be suitable to the relation of those who cherish them; we admire the moral beauty they exhibit, and admit that if persons bring children into the world, it behoves them to assist their offspring in a voyage on which they have caused them to embark. On the other hand, it is fit that the children should feel due gratitude for what they have received from their greatest earthly benefactors. If it be good to live; to enjoy many temporal comforts and blessings; to have proposed to us the favour of God, the means of grace, and the hopes of immortality; our fathers and mothers are the channels by which these benefits have been conveyed. Even heathen nations recognised the propriety of rendering to parents the τροφεῖα, to which they were so justly entitled. These feelings too tend to good. Helpless infancy and headstrong youth need the fostering care and watchful control of parental affection. Imbecile age requires the attention of those who may minister to its wants with gratitude and love. We recognise then these natural emotions of the human heart, and consider also that their operation, when duly consecrated to the

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honour of God, will be acceptable in His sight; Who even now makes them sources of true delight to those whom they influence. Still we may recollect that the instinct of maternal affection is a stimulus strongly developed even in the brutes. Though these feelings then be cherished and cultivated in the human heart, they are nevertheless to be regulated in subordination to elevated and ennobling principles, by which man is peculiarly distinguished. We all remember the story of Brutus in his capacity as magistrate condemning his own sons to death: "Consules in sedem processere suam; missique lictores ad sumendum supplicium, nudatos virgis cædunt, securique feriunt: quum inter omne tempus pater, vultusque et os ejus spectaculo esset, eminente animo patrio inter publicæ pœnæ ministerium."* Here we have a graphic representation of the conflict of principles and of a species of martyrdom.† But if on the contrary parental or filial affection induces me to set up an idol in my heart to the exclusion of Him who ought there to reign supreme; if it leads me to commit some great crime, a murder or robbery, or even to violate any known principle of justice between man and man; my conduct is indefensible, and cannot please God, who

* Livy, II. c. 5.

† See above, note p. 140.

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has a right to demand that we should act not merely according to a part, but agreeably to the whole of the nature with which we are endowed and the powers given to us,* making those portions subordinate and those predominant which were designed to submit and to prevail.

Consider again the emotion of hope. Though the attainment of specific good objects be not always morally certain or even probable, yet it may be perfectly right that we should aim at them; and though we may not, still possibly we may attain them. Now hope is a stimulus to action, urging on in the path marked out as that of duty, at times perhaps encouraging our wearied spirits, animating us to perseverance and renewed efforts, and tending finally to place us in the haven where we would be. Let this feeling however be chastised and disciplined. First let its intensity be proportioned to the value of the things to be attained. Is the worth of any temporal advantage to be compared with that of the favour of God, and of the prospects of future happiness? But again, the good of temporal enjoy-

* I say "the powers given to us," for though there be a weakness of nature, yet is there a supply of grace. Hence power is given or may be attained by prayer. See below, Book IV. c. 4.

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ments admits an infinite variety of degrees. Who ever estimates the accommodations of his night's lodging at an inn in the same balance as the more permanent comforts of his regular dwelling-house? Who will sell his birthright for a mess of pottage?* Moreover, let our hope be mitigated by the reflection that, after all, possibility or even probability of possession is different from certainty: it is but reasonable that the mind be prepared for failure no less than success. Again, as Jeremy Taylor tells us, "a stammerer cannot with moderation hope for the gift of tongues; or a peasant to become learned as Origen; or if a beggar desires or hopes to become a king, or asks for a thousand pounds a-year, we call him impudent, not passionate, much less reasonable." And "let the husbandman (he adds) hope for a good harvest, not for a rich kingdom, or a victorious army." So that our hopes should be suitable to our state and condition, and not directed to objects which we have no prospect of attaining. "A hope that is easy and credulous is an arm of flesh, an ill supporter without a

* We have seen, too, above (p. 134) that we know not *absolutely* what is most profitable for us, power or weakness, riches or poverty, honour or dishonour, health or sickness, life or death: this is a consideration by which to moderate hope.

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bone."* (See Taylor again.) Experience, too, proves what our sense of retributive justice compels us to acknowledge as in no way harsh, in regard to hopes essentially unreasonable or immoderately cherished. Under ordinary circumstances and according to the common course of nature (*i. e.* the law of the God of nature), they lead to a painful reaction and distress of mind, and thus, in the main, bring with them their own not undeserved punishment.

Let us take another example. A natural feeling of the human heart is the love of approbation, and closely allied to it is the fear of censure. Now these emotions are often instruments of great good. Under their influence many actions highly beneficial both to individuals and to society are performed, and what would or might be outrageous ebullitions of wickedness are checked and restrained. Moreover, character and reputation are in themselves very valuable, inasmuch as they confer upon their possessor a moral influence and power, which, under the Divine blessing, he may well direct to the accomplishment of

* It is of course evident that hopes which contemplate a sinful end, or the use of wicked means, are altogether to be excluded. "He that hopes for an opportunity (says Jeremy Taylor) of acting his revenge, or lust, or rapine, watches to do himself a mischief."

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holy purposes and to the promotion of the honour and glory of God. Accordingly, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men"* is the injunction of Scripture. It is clear, therefore, that we are to make it our endeavour, not only that our proceedings be essentially right, but also that (where no higher principle intervenes) they may bear an appearance in the sight of the world to which they are fairly entitled.

Indeed this appearance makes them amiable in the eyes of our fellow-creatures, and so leads other men to imitation; and example set forth in a pleasing and graceful form is a powerful instrument of moral discipline. Why should virtue be deprived of that which belongs to her and tends to the promotion of her interests? Why should I, by morose carelessness, omit to make the most of the good deed I meditate? How is it consistent with the sentiments of benevolence to men which I ought to cherish, not to endeavour to lead them to good? If I am to be intent upon promoting the honour of God, how does it agree with such intention, not to let the principle work to its utmost, and spread its salutary effects, as far as my name or influence may extend? Accordingly, "Let your light so shine before men, that

* Rom. xii. 17; see also 2 Cor. viii. 21.

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they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

But this love of approbation and fear of censure, unless strictly watched and disciplined, may tend to great evil. Through them we may be tempted to vain self-conceit and pride; induced to set our hearts upon our own honour and glory, and to exalt ourselves as independent and irresponsible. Still, from the fear of temptation we are not to neglect the duty enjoined by Christ.

In regard to these difficulties, we may derive some instruction from the consideration of what St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine ownself; for I know nothing by myself: yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord."† Herein then are implied three tribunals, that of men, of his own conscience, of God. These rise in authority one above the other. The conscience is higher than the tribunal of men, God is greater than the conscience. In regard to men, their most weighty judgments are those given by authority. But my conscience may truly testify, that even authoritative decisions, much more flippant and immodest

* Matth. v. 16.

† 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

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judgments pronounced upon me by my fellow-creatures are erroneous.

When however I receive, either from authority or otherwise, approbation or censure, a proper course for me as a man to take, seems to be this, viz. seriously and diligently to examine myself. The circumstance that has occurred is a call to such a survey. For, on the one hand the partiality of friends may be deceitful; on the other the energy of enemies having taught them, may by their means teach me, truth. My own conscience however has necessarily fuller evidence on which to judge, than others can have, inasmuch as it is more intimately acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, with the objects proposed, and the feelings which influenced. The question then arises: Does my conscience acknowledge the judgment that has been pronounced, as just, or reject it as unjust?* In the case of approbation: if it is just, since my conduct ought to have been designed for the promotion of God's honour, to whose service I was consecrated at baptism, and to whom every

* Even a heathen writer could recognise such a sentiment as the following:

Falsus honor juvat, et mendax infamia terret
Quem nisi mendosum et mendacem?

Hor. Epist. I. 16, 39.

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action of my life is to be dedicated (see above, p. 64), then ought the approbation now rendered to be considered as honour due to Him: accordingly I must take especial heed lest I be tempted to appropriate to myself what belongs to God. But if the approbation is undeserved, then ought I to renounce it altogether. God is true, and will not accept a lie. But say that I am censured, and my conscience, however unwilling, is compelled to admit the justice of this censure: here is a call to humble myself before God, to deplore my fault, to resolve upon amendment, and to pray for Divine assistance, that I may persevere in such resolution. If however I am censured unjustly, I must of course reject the censure: though my natural feelings be pained, still may I consider that this is but a portion of the trouble to which man is subjected by the permission or decree of the All-wise Creator. Such troubles at all events tend to wean us from our too great fondness of a world in which we are but sojourners and pilgrims.

To revert to St. Paul's expressions. The tribunal of God is of course higher than that of our own conscience. For He assuredly knows every thing: whereas our capacities are limited; we may not have perceived or duly understood all the circumstances of a given case, or may have

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forgotten them. Again, we may be biassed by prejudice or passion: but He is essentially just. Add to these things that God is our natural Superior and rightful Lord; we are not our own, but bought with a price.

It may be added that these natural feelings of the hearts of men, *i.e.* love of approbation and fear of censure, which they may receive from their fellow-creatures, do at all events operate to give scope and exercise to a sense of responsibility in general; do induce a habit of searching for and appreciating answers; of admitting the sound, and rejecting the weak. Accordingly, moral culture is thus naturally promoted, and the mind is prepared for the proper consideration of those higher tribunals implied in the words of St. Paul, to which we are ultimately responsible.

Let us consider again the feeling of pride. A true and just estimate of his own position, pretensions, claims, opportunities, abilities, should be made by every man: otherwise how can he act suitably to the circumstances in which he is placed? how duly direct his energies to the attainment of good, his talents to the fulfilment of the purposes for which they were given, unless he first rightly appreciate their power? But there is a feeling of the heart, viz. pride, under the influence of which we are led to take an

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unfair view, an exaggerated estimate of our own situation, claims, and strength; "to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think."* Let us now see what are the dictates of reason and conscience on this matter. In the first place, this partial and exaggerated notion is inconsistent with truth, and must therefore be a subject of disapprobation in the sight of a God of truth. "All pride (says Jeremy Taylor) is a lie." Pride again is forbidden in Scripture. "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination unto the Lord."†

Moreover look to the results. An exaggerated idea of our own powers leads us to aim at things placed beyond our reach; of our own dignity, to exact from others more than is due, and therefore to treat them oppressively and contumeliously. Scripture too exhibits the injurious consequences of pride. "When pride cometh, then cometh shame."‡ Again, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty."‖

The account of David and Goliath gives us a lively description of the insolence of the latter. "When the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him: for he was

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* Rom. xii. 3.
† Prov. xvi. 5.
‡ Prov. xi. 2.
‖ Prov. xviii. 12.

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but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, 'Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, 'Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field.'"* So again the poet paints Irus:

Εἶκε γέρον προθύρου μὴ δὴ τάχα καὶ ποδὸς ἕλκῃ·
Οὐκ ἀΐεις, ὅτι δή μοι ἐπιλλίζουσιν ἅπαντες
Ἑλκέμεναι δὲ κέλονται;
* * * * * *
ὃν ἂν κακὰ μητισαίμην,
Κόπτων ἀμφοτέρῃσι, χαμαὶ δ' ἐκ πάντας ὀδόντας
Γναθμῶν ἐξελάσαιμι, συὸς ὣς λῃβοτείρης.
Ζῶσαι νῦν, ἵνα πάντες ἐπιγνώωσι καὶ οἵδε
Μαρναμένους· πῶς δ' ἂν σὺ νεωτέρῳ ἀνδρὶ μάχοιο;†

And wise enough was the answer of the king of Israel to the vain-glorious Ben-hadad: "Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off."‡

Vainly to boast of an event before it happens is indeed a mark of folly: for herein is implied the delivery of a judgment not required, and founded upon evidence more or less obscure, when we know that hereafter clear light will burst forth from the womb of time.

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* 1 Sam. xvii. † Hom. Odyss. Σ. ‡ 1 Kings xx. 11.

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Pride then, in its principle involving a lie, leads to issues the reverse of good, essentially and wholly bad.* A man therefore who is under the dominion of this feeling, naturally takes a course of action altogether opposed to that which we formerly† contemplated as acceptable in the sight of God, viz. the aiming at good objects in a proper and justifiable manner: moreover he violates the law written in passages of Holy Scripture, by which our attention is more particularly fixed, and at the same time an additional sanction is imposed.

We will content ourselves with one more example; that of some maxim, such as has been mentioned above,‡ which having been long treasured in the mind, the love of it has at length become a moving principle.‖ If the maxim be sound, this is all as it should be. Our inquirer, in reviewing the character of his servants, will here find one of essential utility, whom it is worth his while to cherish; for its assistance may avail when other considerations are not

* "Primislaus, the first king of Bohemia, kept his country shoes always by him, to remember from whence he was raised: and Agathocles by the furniture of his table confessed, that from a potter he was raised to be the king of Sicily."—Jer. Taylor.

† See p. 145. ‡ B. II. chap. 6. ‖ See p. 188.

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present to his mind, and he is embarrassed by unexpected difficulties. On the other hand, if the maxim be evil, or of no particularly good or bad tendency, he will very properly endeavour to eject it from his mind, as tending to vitiate, or at all events perplex his judgment. It is at least unprofitable, and ought never to have been admitted.

We have before been led to the consideration of prejudices.* Not only does the love of wrong or worthless maxims weaken the judgment; but unchastised affections and desires in general have the same effect.† Unless the rightful authority of the higher faculties be duly asserted, unless they command, experience shews that they will usually serve. Their sensibility will be impaired, their powers limited: thus shorn and fettered they will become inferior. This is quite

* See pp. 106, 107.

† "The most common case of Bias (observes Mill), is that in which we are biassed by our wishes: but the liability is almost as great to the undue adoption of a conclusion which is disagreeable to us, as of one which is agreeable, if it be of a nature to bring into action any of the stronger passions. Persons of timid character are the more predisposed to believe any statement, the more it is calculated to alarm them." After our Saviour's resurrection, though He shewed His disciples His hands and His feet, they "believed not for joy." (Luke xxiv. 41.) The event so accorded with their strongest wishes, that at first they could not credit it.

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agreeable to the usual order of things and the appointments of nature. When the authority and power of a government are weakened, rebels are not usually content with equality; they aspire to dominion. If once injustice is recognised and commenced, there appears no reason why it should, nor will it (unless some cause operate as a check) stop at one limit rather than another.

Let us consider then how passion often unduly sways the mind and influences conduct.

Some cases are palpable and glaring. Urged by the predominant stimulus, a man rushes like a wild beast at his object: not only despises all enlarged ideas of propriety and utility; but even omits to consider whether the violence of his means may not tend to the frustration of his own purposes, bad as the purposes may be, and unjustifiable the manner of proceeding. Here we have the lowest state of degradation—the entire prostration of conscience and intellect.

But suppose a better case than this. Say that a person is improperly moved by passion, but nevertheless has not utterly divested himself of all consideration of his higher faculties.

It would be difficult indeed to imagine, that any undue influence of passion could lead a man, in spite of Euclid's demonstration, to the conclusion that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-

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angled triangle is not equal to the sum of the squares of the two sides: or (to take another sort of proof) that Louis Philippe was not ejected from the throne of France in the year 1848. In such matters there is no place, no scope for deception. The propositions asserted are irrefragably true. The evidence, and that overwhelming, is in their favour: there is none at all against them.* But it is where we have to estimate things in two opposing scales, and a heavier weight of evidence is to be balanced against a lighter, that room is afforded for unworthy cavils,

* "The most violent inclination (writes Mill) to find a set of propositions true, will not enable the weakest of mankind to believe them without a vestige of intellectual grounds, without any, even apparent evidence. It can only act indirectly by placing the intellectual grounds of belief in an incomplete or distorted shape before his eyes. It makes him shrink from the irksome labour of a vigorous induction, when he has a misgiving that its result may be disagreeable: and in such examination as he does institute, it makes him exert that which *is* in a certain measure voluntary, his attention, unfairly; giving a larger share of it to the evidence which seems favourable to the desired conclusion, a smaller to that which seems unfavourable. And the like, when the bias arises not from desire but fear. Although a person afraid of ghosts believes that he has seen one on evidence wonderfully inadequate, he does not believe it altogether without evidence: he has perceived some unusual appearance while passing through a churchyard: he saw something start up near a grave, which looked white in the moonshine."

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and the mind biassed by passion is led to error, or even grievous delinquency and crime.

Conceive now first that the truth of facts or events is to be established, that such and such things have been, are, will be; as a preliminary to action.

It may be that the scales in which the evidence is weighed are not nicely and delicately poised, but though there be weight in both, still one or the other may preponderate heavily, and in a manner altogether clear to persons of ordinary honesty and fairness: yet, by one who is deficient in these qualities and subjected to the evil influence, the worse may be supposed to be the better argument: he may admit an unsound conclusion, and so conduct himself in a manner totally at variance with the light which has been given him. In proportion to the greater weight of the preponderating evidence, his delinquency of course becomes greater. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you."* Such are the consequences of not rightly estimating evi-

* Matth. xi. 21.

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dence. But to return to the principle. It does not follow that because Chorazin and Bethsaida were worse, Tyre and Sidon were not bad. As there are innumerable degrees of evidence, so of course are there of sinfulness in not rightly appreciating its force. It has been shewn* that sometimes even in matters of great importance truth can only be obtained by difficult efforts, by laborious application of the highest powers of intellect, by severe cross-examination possibly and sifting; such investigation being carried on in a manner the most composed, calm, unruffled. But suppose in a case of this kind the unfair bias of passion is introduced. Then its unjust weight causes that which is essentially lighter to appear the heavier scale, and falsehood is obtained instead of truth. The man acts (it may be) suitably to certain propositions assumed to be true, which nevertheless are not true: and thus a capital error is committed.

But another case, where passion warps the judgment, is where the evidence is insufficient, and in reality it only appears that a proposition very possibly may be true; yet a person earnestly desiring to act suitably to the proposition supposed to be true, takes it as such, and proceeds

* Page 22.

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accordingly. In the cases before supposed, passion prevented him from recognising the stronger power of evidence. Here, the matter being doubtful, his desire leads him to an unjustifiable assumption. According to the law of England, as exemplified in the administration of criminal justice, a man is dealt with as innocent, unless proved to be guilty. This is sometimes vaunted as a sign of the mild spirit of English law. It is in reality a maxim according only with strict justice. You are not justified in punishing, unless you are at liberty to take for granted the guilt of the accused. You can only assume this guilt when it is shewn by evidence, proved. In cases involving moral conduct, it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind that an *onus probandi* lies upon the shoulders of him who makes assertions. Clearly then it is the business of the accuser to prove his allegations. It is not incumbent upon the accused to make answer to a vague and unsubstantiated charge by proof of his innocence. Similarly if claims of a doubtful character, *i. e.* really doubtful to my own conscience, are preferred against me, I am not bound to recognise them. Before the mind can admit a principle, it must be convinced that the principle *is*, not that it *may be* sound. Otherwise it assumes what may or may not be true, wherein is a moral delinquency.

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But say, that in a question involving conduct, the mind, in spite of perplexities, has nevertheless arrived at truth in regard to the certainty of facts or events. The business, however, is not yet completed. Another stage, and perhaps a difficult one, still remains. A course of action is to be adopted suitable to such facts or events. Be it granted that the jury is right in finding the prisoner guilty, yet if the judge inflicts an undue punishment, here is a flaw in the proceedings. Similarly in the case of a man improperly influenced by passion. Though he may not have been misled in his search for the truth of certain alleged circumstances, he may yet fail in respect to the conduct to be pursued, and thus fall into error, vice, crime. Still, all along perhaps will he profess that he is acting according to his conscience. This indeed, though a judge, is a partial one; has used a false balance, and does itself require instruction.* "Consult not with a woman (says

* See above, pp. 107, 108. Persons are sometimes inclined to think that errors in judgment cannot imply any fault in their moral character. When labouring under such errors, they are accustomed too to vaunt their sincerity. "At least they are no hypocrites." "It would be well for them if they were as clear-sighted as their neighbours, but they are as God made them, and their abilities were given by Him." Assuredly no complaint can lie against them, because their natural powers

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the wise son of Sirach) respecting her of whom she is jealous; neither with a coward in matters of war; nor with a merchant concerning exchange; nor with a buyer of selling; nor with an envious man of thankfulness; nor with an unmerciful man touching kindness; nor with the slothful for any work; nor with an hireling for a year of finishing work; nor with an idle servant of much business."*

It is of course manifest that the more knowledge our inquirer can obtain of the natural tendencies of the instinctive moving principles, the better prepared will he be to govern and to use them. These principles have a character, and are subject to habits. He will be diligent therefore in continuing his observation of this character, of which he has already noticed some peculiarities. He will recollect the manner of their operation at former periods of his life, when subjected to a looser system of government than that which he now intends to impose. He will

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are not greater than they are: nevertheless a very grave charge may be substantiated if they do not duly cultivate and improve the talents committed to their trust, or if they perversely refuse to avail themselves of the light given to direct their path, and so fall into error through their own wilful indulgence of prejudice and passion.

* Ecclus. xxxvii. 11.

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remark the mental phenomena exhibited by other men, and compare them with his own. He will gain information from the remarks of his friends or from books. Thus a wise general studies the disposition and habits of his officers and soldiers: he has gleaned knowledge perhaps by observing their conduct under the command of former generals his predecessors; and he may have remarked the character of other soldiers under other rules of government: he receives assistance too from experienced and skilful friends. Accordingly he obtains a facility in fulfilling his duties; and while he keeps all under due restraint, he makes all do his work. The consideration of habits then, important in all respects, is worthy of especial attention, as connected with the character of our lower propensities. It may suffice to adduce a well-known passage of Butler with reference to this matter:

"The constitution of human creatures, and indeed of all creatures which come under our notice, is such as that they are capable of naturally becoming qualified for states of life, for which they were once wholly unqualified. In imagination we may indeed conceive of creatures as incapable of having any of their faculties naturally enlarged, or as being unable naturally to acquire any new qualifications: but the faculties

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of every species known to us are made for enlargement; for acquirements of experience and habits. We find ourselves in particular endued with capacities, not only of perceiving ideas, and of knowledge or perceiving truth, but also of storing up our ideas and knowledge by memory. We are capable not only of acting and of having different momentary impressions made upon us, but of getting a new facility in any kind of action, and of settled alterations in our temper or character. The power of the two last is the power of habits.

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"Habits of the mind are produced by the exertion of inward practical principles, *i. e.* by carrying them into act, or acting upon them; the principles of obedience, of veracity, justice, and charity. Nor can those habits be formed by any external course of action, otherwise than as it proceeds from these principles; because it is only these inward principles exerted, which are strictly acts of obedience, of veracity, of justice, and of charity. So likewise habits of attention, industry, self-government are in the same manner acquired by exercise: and habits of envy and revenge by indulgence, whether in outward act or in thought and intention, *i. e.* inward act; for such intention is an act.

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"From our very faculty of habits, passive impressions by being repeated grow weaker. Thoughts by often passing through the mind are felt less sensibly: being accustomed to danger begets intrepredity, *i.e.* lessens fear; to distress, lessens the passion of pity; to instances of others' mortality, lessens the sensible impression of our own. And from these two observations together—that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us—it must follow that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, whilst these motives and excitements themselves are by proportionable degrees growing less sensible, *i.e.* are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. And experience confirms this: for active principles, at the very time that they are less lively in perception than they were, are found to be somehow wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and become more effectual in influencing our practice. The three things just mentioned may afford instances of it. Perception of danger is a natural excitement of passive fear and active caution; and by being inured to danger habits of the latter are gradually

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wrought, at the same time that the former gradually lessens. Perception of distress in others is a natural excitement, passively to pity, and actively to relieve it: but let a man set himself to attend to, inquire out, and relieve distressed persons, and he cannot but grow less and less sensibly affected with the various miseries of life, with which he must become acquainted; when yet, at the same time, benevolence, considered not as a passion but as a practical principle of action, will strengthen: and whilst he passively compassionates the distressed less, he will acquire a greater aptitude actively to assist and befriend them. So also, at the same time that the daily instances of men's dying around us give us daily a less sensible passive feeling or apprehension of our own mortality, such instances greatly contribute to the strengthening a practical regard to it in serious men, *i.e.* to forming an habit of acting with a constant view to it."*

* This passage may teach us to appreciate a very remarkable contrast. One man is free from the dominion of bad passions; and his good feelings quietly and systematically serve their proper purposes. Another is governed by the bad, which being indulged gain increased power; while the good not duly operating become at length inefficient.

Is there not something especially moral in these truths respecting passive principles and active habits?

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If it was intended that man being moved by certain good feelings, as for instance of pity for distress, should act accordingly, *i.e.* proceed to exert himself, with a view of affording relief; and if having felt the emotion, being sensible of the call upon him, he does not act; would it *a priori* seem likely that God would allow His good gifts to be habitually slighted? Would it appear consistent with His dignity, or suitable to His wisdom, continually and for ever to persevere in supplying motives and opportunities to mankind, of which men never availed themselves? See too what experience teaches us. Is it not of a piece with the general dealings of Providence, that a call not being obeyed, does gradually become less powerful, and at length cease? Even in our temporal affairs if we neglect opportunities, we are not able to recal them at pleasure. So in Scripture we read, "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matth. xxvi. 29.)

Again, if on the other hand the passive principles, supposed good, produce their due effect; if they generate active habits, and if the principles, at the very time that they are less lively in perception than they were, are found to be somehow wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and are more effectual in influencing practice; then indeed may it not well be tolerated and permitted, (let us speak with all reverence!) that the passive impressions become by repetition gradually weaker? For their object is at length accomplished; and there is no further need of their very perceptible power.

Moreover, if bad passive impressions, as those of envy, revenge, are allowed habitually to influence to action; then naturally (and how can it be said unjustly?) the moral character becomes in the worst manner vitiated. For a step beyond the mere admission of evil principles being taken, and active habits being formed; the man only reaps what he has sown; and whom can he blame but himself? Whereas, on the contrary, if the evil affection, the passive principle, is always checked, and so, not leading to action, becomes gradually weaker, and at length a habit of insensibility to its power is

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formed; does not the man thus fairly enjoy the benefit of those moral checks which he has been led to impose? Is not his character relieved from a portion of that evil by which it has been threatened?

THE END OF BOOK III.

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BOOK IV.

REFLECTIONS UPON CERTAIN CAPITAL POINTS ESTABLISHED IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

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CHAPTER I.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION TO BE CONSULTED JOINTLY WITH THE BOOK OF NATURE. CERTAIN GREAT TRUTHS EXHIBITED IN SCRIPTURE WILL ILLUSTRATE OUR PRINCIPLES AND SERVE AS GUIDES OF CONDUCT.

HITHERTO the attention of our inquirer has been occupied in obtaining and illustrating his conclusions in whatever manner he was able. Any source of assistance that lay before him, he has adopted. And surely without impropriety. For though in carrying on such speculations as those to which he has been led, men have sometimes studiously avoided all considerations of revealed religion,* his objects have not been to

* "Mr. Hume (writes Paley) has been pleased to complain of the modern scheme of uniting ethics with the Christian theology." .... "An ambassador judging by what he knows of his sovereign's disposition, and arguing from what he has observed of his conduct, or is acquainted with of his designs, may take his measures in many cases with safety, and presume with great probability how his master would have him act on most occasions that arise; but if he have his commission and instructions in his pocket, it would be strange not to look into them. He will naturally conduct himself by both rules."

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establish systems upon limited data, but to find out and so discharge his duty as a "sensitive, intellectual, moral, and religious being."* His proceedings, however, have been but agreeable to the conduct of all men in matters wherein they are deeply interested. When any one is struggling for life or death, he gladly takes assistance whencesoever it may be gained. Accordingly the inquirer struggling for spiritual life or

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"We have two sources of knowledge (says Abercrombie), the light of conscience, and the light of divine revelation. In making this statement I am aware that I tread on delicate ground, and that some will consider an appeal to the sacred writings as a departure from the strict course of philosophical inquiry..... If indeed in any investigation in moral science, we disregard the light which is furnished by the sacred writings, we resemble an astronomer who should rely entirely on his unaided sight, and reject those optical inventions which extend so remarkably the field of his vision, as to be to him the revelation of things not seen.... In the limited knowledge which is furnished by vision alone, he finds difficulties which he cannot explain,.... but in the more extended knowledge which the telescope yields, these difficulties disappear; facts are brought together which seemed unconnected or discordant; and the universe appears one beautiful system of order and consistency. It is the same in the experience of the moral inquirer when he extends his views beyond the inductions of reason, and corrects his conclusions by the testimony of God. Discordant principles are brought together; doubts and difficulties disappear; and beauty, order, and harmony are seen to pervade the government of the Deity."

* Brown's Lectures.

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spiritual death, has gathered the elements of his knowledge wherever they lay scattered. Of the book of revelation as well as of the book of nature,* God assuredly designed us to make use, and to observe the phenomena of other men's minds, and to avail ourselves of their knowledge no less than of our own. But, from what source soever the inquirer has derived his truths, they are at all events illustrations of the application of moral evidence: and though we have not pretended to exhibit a complete system in regard to any subject on which we have touched, it has still been our aim to shew a manner of proceeding which may be adopted by the mind of man in all matters claiming its attention. An extension of his principles may, it is hoped, suffice for our inquirer in what circumstances soever he may be placed.

In regard to what now lies before us, it is indeed foreign to our purpose to pursue the details of Scripture: it is certain, too, that plain precepts, or even clear inferences from acknowledged truths, will at once be received by every one who studies the sacred volume from a sense

* "There are two books (says an old writer) from whence I collect my divinity; besides that written one of God, another of His servant nature, that universal and public manuscript that lies expansed unto the eyes of all."

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of duty and with a sincere desire of improvement.* Nevertheless, Scripture being a book, as

* It really seems almost superfluous to urge upon Christians the duty of frequently and diligently studying Scripture. This book is not a mere subject of curious speculation and literary research, but is stamped with divine authority, and exhibits the relation of God to man. Consider the conduct of men even in temporal relations. If the legislature of a country enacts a law, those who are to carry out the enactment diligently study its force and meaning. Otherwise how can they fulfil their duty? Can anything more decidedly express disrespect and contempt for any one than to take no heed of the meaning of a notice which he gives you? We pay attention to what is said by an inferior, much more an equal, still more a superior. But what if that superior has an official authority and control over our conduct? Suppose a parent writes a letter to his son containing directions for his guidance: will he not read and diligently try to understand its full meaning? Yet how infinitely less stringent are any human ties than those which bind man to God! What inexpressible majesty and dignity are combined in the idea of the Deity! What feelings of love, veneration, and hope are united at the mention of His name!

Again, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matth. iv. 4.) If a child does not receive that sufficiency of bodily food which would be wholesome, is not his growth stunted, his body weakened, his energy impaired? But on the other hand, if he is properly fed, does he not duly increase in stature and become physically vigorous? Does not analogy, then, thus shew what is likely to be the case in regard to spiritual growth; in regard to our increase "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?" (Eph. iv. 13.)

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Paley says, "sui generis," it may be worth our while, before we conclude our speculations, to take more particular account of certain capital points established in Holy Writ. For truths materially affecting the condition of man, and intimately connected with the consideration of his powers and responsibilities, are there presented to us, and are not discoverable by mere human sagacity. But in whatever way we can gain information of circumstances so weighty as to change, or indeed considerably modify, our whole position as creatures related to our great Creator, whether from the light of nature alone, or from that and Scripture conjoined, or from Scripture

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Moreover, how admirably suited is constant meditation upon Scripture to produce the desired results. We often fail in our duty, not because we are ignorant, but because the sense of this duty is not sufficiently fixed in our minds. The remembrance glides away in the hurry and bustle of life. Accordingly St. Peter writes, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them." (2 Pet. i. 12). Now the frequent perusal of holy Scripture naturally supplies a remedy for our weakness, and stirs up the remembrance of things which though not unknown, are still unready for application at the time of need.

Add to these considerations the blessing which, we may well hope, will attend those who study God's Word in obedience to His will. Experience likewise shews that such study does tend to the implanting, cherishing, and strengthening of holy desires.

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only,* such information must be of inestimable value to those who are honestly endeavouring to fulfil their destiny.

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* Some persons are in the habit of absurdly vilifying their natural powers, and conclude that they thus honour God, that they exalt His written word, and abase themselves in a manner acceptable to Him by entertaining a low estimate of their own capacities.

Now it is quite clear that Scripture cannot be exalted by such contempt of men's natural faculties: for Scripture is admitted because the evidence on which it depends is such as to commend itself to the judicial faculty of mankind. If therefore we vilify this faculty, instead of exalting Scripture, we sap the very foundations on which it is supported. "In God's name," says a learned prelate, "if Scripture can be shewn to be inconsistent with reason, let Scripture be given up."

Moreover, as regards self-abasement, the judicial faculty is God's gift equally with Scripture, and therefore not to be lightly esteemed. Again, whatever we have, we hold as stewards. If then we despise, *i. e.* do not estimate at its true worth that which we thus hold, how shall we duly apply it to its proper purposes, and so render a joyful account to our Lord? Besides, to undervalue what is good, is to cherish a falsehood, and must therefore be offensive in the sight of a God of truth.

But as these persons are disposed unduly to abase men's natural powers, so there are others who improperly exalt them; claim for them more than is their right; require explanations to which they are not entitled; and reject Scripture because their natural faculties are unable to comprehend the mysteries therein revealed. If I have evidence to shew that a thing *is*, it is absurd to reject such evidence because I know

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Moreover, by considering these main features of Scripture, we shall but continue the course which has hitherto been pursued: we shall but contemplate truths which illustrate the power of moral evidence, and are themselves guides of conduct.

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not *how* it is. An ignorant peasant may observe a railway train pass by him with amazing velocity: he knows not *how* the velocity is accomplished; but his belief that it is accomplished is not at all shaken by such ignorance. A certain quantity of arsenic if administered to a man will assuredly kill him. I may not be sufficiently acquainted with the secrets of nature, with chemistry and the constitution of the human subject, to know *how* this comes to pass; but I am convinced that it does happen, because I have abundant evidence compelling me to believe, and none at all to the contrary. Such examples illustrate by contrast the conduct of those who reject Scripture because it contains things above their comprehension. While they profess to exalt the natural powers of man, they are in reality guilty of absurdity. Just as the former persons, pretending to exalt Scripture do in effect, as far as in them lies, undermine its foundations.

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CHAPTER II.

THE NATURAL SINFULNESS OF MAN.

SIN, according to the definition given in Scripture, is "the transgression of the law."* And it is plain that these words draw no distinction between what are called small sins and great sins: but it is determined absolutely that he who transgresseth the law sinneth. Now a most remarkable trait in the human character, and a truth of immense importance as well as difficulty for man both fully to know and practically to acknowledge, is the defilement and degradation of the entire human race. To an intelligent mind acquainted with only a portion of our history, might it not appear most strange and inexplicable that rational creatures, such as we are, should not only not fulfil but even oppose the designs of the Creator. For why, he might argue, should an omniscient Maker make such beings? When he was informed that God had written a law in sufficiently legible characters

* 1 John iii. 4.

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upon our hearts, would not his surprise be increased? For now, he might reason, was not this law thus written with the intent that it should be obeyed? After he was told that the law of nature had been emphatically repeated and authoritatively confirmed by a communication written in ink, as that of Holy Scripture, would not this astonishment be altogether inexpressible? Might he not observe that the rivers obey their law and flow into the ocean; the planets know their courses; "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy-work; one day telleth another, and one night certifieth another; the sun cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course"?* Might he not cry out with Jeremy Taylor, that "God has fitted horses and mules with strength, bees and pismires with sagacity, harts and hares with swiftness, birds with feathers and a light airy body; and they all know their times, and are fitted for their work, and regularly acquire the proper end of their creation; but man that was designed to an immortal duration and the fruition of God for ever, knows not how to obtain it; he is made upright to look up to heaven, but he knows no more how to purchase it than to climb it." For,

* Psa. xix.

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as St. Paul tells us, man is "dead in trespasses and sins."*

That we are naturally corrupt, however, is a truth most important for us to know and to acknowledge. A sincere and settled conviction of his own sinfulness must necessarily be felt by every man who, renouncing that sinfulness, honestly endeavours to become for the future a faithful servant of God. The preliminary is naturally indispensable. He who determines to forsake a thing must know its existence. What if a man was sick, and pretended he was well? he would not avail himself of the medicines suited to his case, and therefore might even lose his life, in consequence of not recognising a first principle. But he whose body is diseased first admits that it is so; then betaking himself to a physician, receives suitable directions, and in ordinary cases recovers his health. Similarly in regard to spiritual sickness. Acknowledging our disease, we must have recourse to the great Physician of our souls, and availing ourselves of the remedies prescribed by Him, can thus only hope to be healed. "Come unto me," says our Saviour, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."† They who

* Eph. ii. 1.

† Matth. xi. 28.

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answer to such a call, confess that they do labour and are heavy laden.

Nevertheless, in spite of the importance of fully knowing, and at all times practically acknowledging our natural corruption, it does so happen that self-conceit and self-love blind our judgments: it is often a matter of long time and great difficulty to receive and preserve a genuine conviction of the wickedness of mankind in general, and of our own sinfulness in particular: and some of us, notwithstanding great variety and severity of discipline, scarcely seem to arrive at the conclusion at all. Sin in the abstract is seen to be so hateful, that though we persist in transgressing (such is human weakness and inconsistency!) we yet invent specious names as a cloak, and conceal the deformity of vice even from our own eyes. Men judge themselves not by the perfect standard of God's law, but by rules which they see recognised among whole classes of mankind: accordingly, if the rules are faulty, as assuredly they often are, the conclusions obtained are erroneous: thus we cheat and delude ourselves to our ruin. Some offences are termed little by those who forget the saying of the son of Sirach, "He that despiseth little things shall perish by little and little."* Other trans-

* Ecclus. xix. 1.

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gressions are indeed a violation of the spirit of the law, and must therefore be offensive in the sight of God, "who is a Spirit, and therefore to be worshipped in spirit and truth;"* still they are of such a nature, that men endeavour with some colourable pretence, and even self-deception, to reconcile them with the letter of the law, and so call themselves innocent. Great allowance again is made for human infirmity and the strength of temptation; and the goodness of God is an attribute especially magnified. In short evasions, subterfuges, palliations, too numerous to recount, are searched out: we endeavour to defend or extenuate certain habits of society, for we wish to conform ourselves to this world: or, if we cannot avoid an acknowledgment of wickedness in general, we deny, or fritter away, or excuse our own sins in particular. For in truth the medicine which Christ supplies, we think bitter; like spoiled children we are unwilling to take it: so we refuse even to acknowledge the complaint.

On the whole then, the natural sinfulness of man is a very suprising and wonderful circumstance: and though the strangeness of the truth, when admitted, tends to impress it more deeply

* John iv. 24.

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on the mind, such strangeness nevertheless stands forth as a preliminary obstacle to the admission: there are likewise additional difficulties in consequence of the immoderate self-esteem and self-love by which men's minds are darkened: yet as the truth is one which it is absolutely necessary for us to know and to appreciate; it would seem (with all reverence be it spoken!) that God, of His goodness, has been pleased to take especial account of these things. There are indeed many wonderful secrets of nature, which, however irrespectively of the gratification of curiosity, it does not concern man to know; and accordingly they are hidden from his view. Still, as regards a matter of so much difficulty and importance, God has thought fit to allow abundant and indeed overpowering evidence to be supplied to us of the certainty of our natural corruption: at the same time He has condescended to remove a cause of perplexity, by explaining how it came to pass that man's nature became thus vitiated: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."* "In Adam all die."†

It is not necessary for our purpose to dwell upon the mass of evidence which has been mentioned. Suffice it to advert to some remarkable

* Rom. v. 12. † Cor. xv. 22.

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particulars. First then the doctrine of human corruption is expressly asserted in Scripture, and so may be called a matter of revelation: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."* "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."† "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."‡ "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."‖ "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."§ "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."¶ "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."** "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."†† The assertion of the same truth is repeated both directly and by implication throughout Scripture. The whole scheme of redemption rests upon it as a pillar. If men are redeemed, from what are they redeemed but the power and

* Rom. v. 12. † Rom. vii. 23. ‡ Ps. li. 5.
‖ Gal. v. 17. § 1 John i. 8. ¶ Rom. iii. 23.
** Jer. xvii. 9. †† Ps. cxliii. 2.

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the penalties of sin? Accordingly our Saviour Himself says, "I came not to call the righteous (there were none righteous, *i.e.* observers of the whole law), but sinners to repentance."* However humiliating the doctrine may be, our business is to consider whether it be true. We have seen what is given in Holy Writ; and though before the delivery of Scripture this doctrine can scarcely be said to have been fully recognised, still human observation may in this as in other matters afford confirmation and illustration of the truth of Scripture. Let a man then look back upon the various transactions of his past life, and say whether experience does not prove that his conduct has been sinful from childhood up to the present hour? And in forming his estimate of life and conduct, I would invite him to consider not merely gross and grievous violations of God's law, as murder, open theft, barefaced adultery, heinous acts, the results of long-cherished evil thoughts, of which he may probably be innocent: but I would ask him also to probe his conscience in regard to his very thoughts, for unchastised thoughts may involve guilt: I would suggest a severe scrutiny of what he may have been accustomed to call his venial offences; for

* Matth. ix. 13.

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transgressions of the law, whether great or small, are still transgressions, recognitions of an evil principle, and proofs of the truth of Scripture.

But again, let him remember the conduct of mankind in general. Do not the records of all nations and of all time, do not wars of which we read, murders, robberies, adulteries, blasphemies, perjuries, idolatries, confirm the same lamentable truth? If we want an account of the iniquities of the heathen, St. Paul's statement* may well suffice. He indeed exhibits a climax of wickedness. Not only did men do the things of which he presents the black catalogue; not only did they proceed a step further, and allow the principle of sin in their own case: but they had pleasure in sinners as sinners; they loved the principle of trangression in general; they called evil good, and good evil. But the history of European society for the last eighteen hundred years shews the deeds of even professing Christians during that period. "From whence (says St. James) come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?"† Consider too the horrors of the Inquisition; the burnings of martyrs; such principles as those involved in the sale of indulgences,

* Rom. i. 26, et seq.

† James iv. 1.

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and the forced celibacy of the clergy; such deeds as the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Let us review again what we know more immediately. Do not circumstances in the conduct of our contemporaries, our neighbours, acquaintances, relatives, friends, convey additional assurance? Innumerable are the faults of which all may be accused. Many the offences that human laws cannot reach, but which God will punish. Not a few are the thefts, forgeries, robberies, burglaries, burnings, even murders, by which our property and our persons are injured, our minds harassed and alarmed. If we desire confirmation arising from the judgments of the wise and learned, we may find innumerable passages and multitudes of authors. "It is a saying of St. Austin (writes Bishop Sherlock), Si non perisset homo, non venisset Christus.....It would be absurd to suppose that Christ came to redeem man from the state and condition in which God made him." Again, in a passage intended doubtless to be applied to men in general: "A condemned malefactor must not sue to his prince in the same terms that a faithful and deserving subject may: the one may represent his service and obedience; the other has nothing to plead but his misery: one applies to the justice and generosity of the prince, the other to his pity

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and compassion. Consider then with yourself: Can you stand a trial with God? Can you plead your services to Him, and say, Behold Thy servant; do unto him according to his works? If you can, justice will do you right: but if your heart misgives you; if your conscience cries out to you, Let us not enter into judgment with our God, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified: what have you to do, but to seek, if haply you may find the mercy of God?" "Such is the imperfection (says Barrow), the impotency, the impurity of all men, even of the wisest and best men (discernible to them who search their hearts and try their ways, strictly comparing them to the rules of duty, God's laws, and the dictates of reason), that no man can have reason to be satisfied in himself, or in his doings: every man looking into himself shall find his mind so pestered with vain and filthy thoughts; his will so perverse, so froward, so weak, so unsteady; his desires so fond and unwarrantable; his passions so disorderly and ungovernable; his affections so misplaced, or at least so cold and dull in regard to their right objects; his resolutions toward good so weak and slack; his intentions so corrupt, or mixed with oblique regards: he that observeth his actions shall in the best of them (as to the principles whence they rise, as to the

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ends they drive at, as to the manner of their performance) find so many great defailances, that he will see cause rather to abhor than admire himself.

"Who, let me ask, doth love God with all his soul, so as to place in Him his total content and delight, so as to do all things out of love to Him, with a regard to His honour and service; so as to be willing and glad to part with all things for His sake? Who hath that constant and lively sense of God's benefits and mercies that he should have? Who hath a perfect resignation of will to His pleasure, so as to be displeased with no event disposed by His hand? Who hath such a vigour of faith and confidence in Him, as will support him in all wants, in all distresses, in all temptations, so as never to be disquieted or discouraged by them, so as to cast on God (as he is commanded) all the cares of his soul and burdens of his life? Who constantly maintaineth a fervour of spirit, a steadiness of resolution, a clear and calm frame of soul, an abstractedness of mind from worldly desires and delights? Who continually is fervent and undistracted in his devotion? Who with an unwearied and incessant diligence doth watch over his thoughts? Who doth entirely command his passions and bridle his appetites? Who doth exactly govern his

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tongue? Who is perpetually circumspect over his actions? Who loveth his neighbour as himself, seeking his good, and delighting therein as in his own, being sorry for his adversities, as if they had befallen himself? Who feeleth that contrition of spirit, that shame, that remorse for his sins, or that detestation of them, which they deserve? Who is duly sensible of his own unworthiness?"

Thus then we have a truth, difficult to receive, and yet of great importance for us to know, *i.e.* all men are naturally diseased by a moral taint, prone to commit sin,* and actually sinners. When a man is convinced of this truth, and has freely admitted it with reference to himself, he has obtained what may be termed an elementary principle of human action: and in regard to the evidence by which it is established, we see that Scripture and the observation of mankind are coherent and harmonious.

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* See Article IX. of our Church.

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CHAPTER III.

OF THE NEW RELATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN CONSEQUENT UPON ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION. REFLECTIONS ON THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST.

It is a sad certainty then, that men are thus born into the world prone to sin, and that they actually do sin. It is of course therefore manifest, that our condition is materially different from what it would be, if there was no such tendency, and if it was in our power to live on free from transgression, and ever ready to render a true answer, that we had at all times discharged our entire duty. Such, we have reason to conclude, would be the case of Adam before the fall, *i. e.* that he had a law given to him, and power to obey.

Now, whatever might be the fate of Adam consequent upon his fall, suppose that from him children were born into the world, subject to a law which it was impossible for them to fulfil: suppose that without any fault of their own (for being unborn at the time of his transgression, they could not be answerable for it) they had

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inherited a natural taint and corruption: conceive it however determined, that in the whole issues and events of things their destiny should be miserable, on the ground of their having broken a law which was given them to fulfil, while no consideration was entertained of their natural infirmity. Suppose now it was attempted to defend such a dispensation: suppose it was alleged that if persons lived under a law, and transgressed, it was naturally and essentially just that they should be punished: conceive it urged too that the transmission of the taint arising from Adam's transgression was but agreeable to the whole course of events in the world: that what was propagated was thus *naturally* deteriorated in consequence of the deterioration of its parent stock: that poor fruit for instance grew on a poor tree, and a bad crop was produced by bad seed. Still it would be open to an objector to reply: Abstractedly indeed it may be right that one who breaks a law to which he is subjected by competent authority, should be punished: yet it must be understood as a limitation to this principle, that he has the power to obey; for assuredly it is what may be likewise termed an abstract principle, that no one is justly answerable where he has no power, "nemo tenetur impossibili": moral agents may reasonably expect to be

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treated according to the rules of morality; and between them and the merely vegetable productions of nature, as fruit or corn, there is an essential and marked difference.

When Adam sinned, it was determined, not that the human race should be utterly extinguished, but that a posterity of Adam should still be born into the world. Nevertheless it appears to have been an indispensable principle, that from a vitiated root there must proceed children of a corrupt nature. It seems likewise another principle, that "the wages of sin is death,"* and the sense of ill-desert implies and is naturally connected with punishment. Still it would appear inconsistent with the justice of a just God, to hold His creatures answerable for things placed beyond their power. Here then are difficulties of which the full comprehension, much more the reconciliation, is manifestly placed above the reach of man's limited faculties. Just as the illiterate and ignorant peasant cannot fully understand the difficulties, much less the solution of the difficulties, which are presented in the path of the statesman: as children are unable to comprehend the circumstances, and therefore of course the conduct suitable to the circumstances of their

* Rom. vi. 23.

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elders: thus man, *a priori*, has no means of determining what it might be necessary to do in the case which has been contemplated; what might be consistent, or not inconsistent, with the high attributes and dignity of the Creator; what physically possible or impossible.

Moreover, all this mystery and difficulty is in no way contrary to what, from the very nature of the case, might, *a priori*, have been well conceivable. Originally, man was placed in a particular relation to his Maker, and faculties being given to him agreeable to such a position, by the act of man the relation was altered. Now whatever course of conduct it might please God to adopt suitable to the new position, it is not at all surprising that the powers of man, being adapted to the former relation, might not suffice for the full comprehension of measures which would have been unnecessary if the ancient position had been preserved.*

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* In the way of illustration we may remark, that even such a doctrine as that of the forgiveness of injuries would have been unknown, had not man fallen; for in a state of innocence there would have been no injuries.

Again, those who reject positive institutions because our unassisted powers have been unable to discover their propriety, would do well to consider, that what might suffice for man in his state of innocence under the first dispensation, might not suffice in his state of degradation under the second.

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It is to be remembered too that man, by an act of disobedience, vacated his position of safety, and tried unknown depths. Would he be preserved at all? If so, how? Was there any ground of expectation that the full understanding of these matters should be vouchsafed to him? If a sovereign pardons a rebellious chief, and receives him again into favour, is it expected that a full disclosure of the conflict of principles which presented difficulties in the way of pardon, should be made to the offender? Is it not enough for him that he is pardoned? Again, a child in his perversity may set fire to a house or apply a torch to a train of gunpowder: he knows not the means of preservation, which yet others of greater experience and intelligence may know and apply. It is well for him if he is in any way preserved.

The difficulties then which were created by the act of man, requiring a higher intelligence than his own fully to understand, much more to solve; God, agreeably to His divine perfections, has been pleased to offer a solution. A new dispensation has been proclaimed. The ancient relation being violated, God, of His great

In all such cases the same principle is involved. If a dispensation is altered by the introduction of new circumstances, other new circumstances, consequent upon the alteration, may naturally cause difficulty and perplexity.

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goodness, was pleased to take such measures with reference to that violation, as entirely altered the circumstances of the case, and established a different relation. As if in the ordinary affairs of human life a relation subsisting between a superior and inferior was virtually annulled by some act of the latter, and the superior was then pleased to establish a new relation, with alterations and modifications adapted to the change of circumstances which had arisen in consequence of the conduct of the inferior.* Thus a master may

* It may perhaps incidentally be remarked that if, under this new arrangement the inferior should conduct himself as if he was in the old position, he would act very absurdly. Nevertheless of a similar character is the behaviour of those who, living under the light of the Gospel, reject the overtures made to them, and profess to live according to the terms of what is called natural religion, a religion evidently inadequate to the necessities of men in their present state of defilement and degradation.

Wise men of antiquity, to whom God did not reveal what He has revealed to us, might well be perplexed by the consideration of the position in which they perceived themselves to stand. Though it be granted that our knowledge even now is not perfect, still the old relation between God and man, such as it might be before the fall, is sufficiently intelligible. So the new one as revealed in the Gospel. But those who lived before the time of our Saviour might perceive even among such as were called the best of mankind, much more among the worst, violations by the creature of his natural relation to the Creator; and yet they did not know the course

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take an old servant on new terms and conditions. A government may employ a general or ambassador with qualifications of their old understanding. A father having a son who has failed in one undertaking, may establish him in another occupation upon changed principles and with new prospects.

We have seen that it would have been impossible for man to have discovered what might be the proper course to be adopted with reference to the position in which Adam had placed himself. It would even have been irreverent in man the offender to have pretended to judge. He could not therefore know that any atonement at all would be necessary or sufficient. But suppose the principle of an atonement admitted, he has no faculties by which to ascertain that such atonement would properly be made in the person of Jesus Christ; of whose very existence, much more of whose nature, character, and qualifications he knows absolutely nothing, save what revelation discloses. In the Gospel, how-

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of action adopted by the Creator with reference to such violations. Natural religion, insufficient for man in his present condition, was yet all of which they might avail themselves. For their perplexities, however, they were not responsible, since the light was denied. In our time, on the contrary, the Deist refuses to receive the explanation which God has given.

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ever, we have been taught the various relations in which we stand to Jesus Christ. The wisdom of God perceived that an atonement was necessary, and an expiation has been made by the death of Christ upon the cross. The thing has been done. We can perceive no defensible objections, we can allege no valid reason why it should not be done. God has done it, and this alone is a sufficient proof* that it was suitable to the circumstances of the case, and that all conditions were fully satisfied by the humiliation and sufferings of Christ. The doctrine is, doubtless, mysterious, *i. e.* beyond our reason, still not contrary to reason; and we have evidence compelling us to admit the truth. What then have we to do, but thankfully to receive and duly to apply the inestimable benefit?

For let us remember, that in the ordinary course of human affairs we continually enjoy advantages in regard to the nature and essence of which we are nevertheless but imperfectly informed. Thus, for instance, we continually rely upon the authority of persons whose knowledge is superior to our own, and so obtain innumerable benefits. When I am ill, my physician does not explain to me the various workings of his own

* See a similar course of reasoning, p. 173.

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more experienced mind; but, judging of my case, and knowing that such and such medicines are good for me, he directs; I obey, and am healed. Of like kind in a multitude of relations is the intercourse between the learned and the ignorant. The necessary dispatch of business alone prevents explanations of details. The issue however is this: Our experience of the common affairs of life trains and disciplines our minds (a discipline certainly foreseen and recognised by the Creator) to admit the great mysteries of religion; and we see that after all these mysteries are only of a piece and uniform with what we daily experience in the conduct of our temporal affairs. All this does in reality but tend to confirm our faith in the doctrines of religion; because it shews that the dispensation of Christianity bears upon it a stamp and character similar to those which mark the dispensation to which we know that we are subject in our temporal concerns. The latter assuredly proceeded from the Creator, and bears His marks: the same marks we find upon the former.

Nevertheless the mysteries of religion have afforded a favourite theme to the subtlety of the sceptic. In connexion with this subject of mysteries, let us consider some of his more remarkable objections.

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Our Saviour says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."* In regard to His being a Mediator between God and man, I will take leave to quote the following passage from Butler's Analogy:

"There is not, I think, anything relating to Christianity which has been more objected against than the mediation of Christ, in some or other of its parts. Yet upon thorough consideration there seems nothing less justly liable to it. For

"I. The whole analogy of nature removes all imagined presumption against the general notion of 'a mediator between God and man.'† For we find all living creatures are brought into the world, and their life in infancy is preserved by the instrumentality of others; and every satisfaction of it, some way or other, is bestowed by the like means. So that the visible government which God exercises over the world is by the instrumentality and mediation of others. And how far His invisible government be or be not so, it is impossible to determine at all by reason. And the supposition that part of it is so, appears, to say the least, altogether as credible as the contrary. There is then no sort of objection from the light of nature against the general notion

* John xiv. 6. † 1 Tim. ii. 5.

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of a mediator between God and man considered as a doctrine of Christianity or as an appointment in this dispensation; since we find by experience that God does appoint mediators to be the instruments of good and evil to us, the instruments of His justice and His mercy. And the objection here referred to is urged not against mediation in that high, eminent, and peculiar sense in which Christ is our mediator, but absolutely against the whole notion itself of a mediator at all."*

This is at least a moderate view to take of the matter. It is questionable whether the argument might not be pressed more strongly so as to recoil upon the adversary.

Let it be granted that there is no objection in principle, none *a priori*, as it is said, to the appointment of a mediator in any dispensation from God to man: let it be granted likewise that God does ordinarily appoint mediators to be the instruments of good and evil to mankind. On the whole then, not only is there no objection to the general notion of a mediator in some new dispensation as that of Christianity; but such appointment being uniform and of a similar character with other known appointments, we

* Butler's Anal., Part II. c. v.

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hence derive what at least is worthy of remark when we estimate the full strength of the positive evidences of Christianity.

The whole of the chapter from which the foregoing passage has been taken, deserves the most attentive consideration. It may be worth while to make another extract in regard to the expiatory sacrifice of Christ.

"There is one objection made against the satisfaction of Christ which looks to be of this positive kind; that the doctrine of his being appointed to suffer for the sins of the world, represents God as being indifferent whether He punished the innocent or the guilty. Now from the foregoing observations* we may see the extreme slightness of all such objections; and (though it is most certain all who make them do not see the consequences) that they conclude altogether as much against God's whole original constitution of nature and the whole daily course

* The foregoing observations have particular reference to the ignorance of men and to the certainty of their being incompetent judges, antecedently to revelation, whether a mediator was or was not necessary: and on the supposition of his being necessary, incompetent judges likewise, antecedently to revelation, of the whole nature of his office or the several parts of which it consists, of what was fit and requisite to be assigned him, in order to accomplish the ends of Divine Providence in the appointment.

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of Divine Providence in the government of the world, *i. e.* against the whole scheme of Theism and the whole notion of religion as against Christianity. For the world is a constitution or system whose parts have a mutual reference to each other, and there is a scheme of things gradually carrying on called the course of nature, to the carrying on of which God has appointed us in various ways to contribute. And when, in the daily course of natural Providence, it is appointed that innocent people should suffer for the faults of the guilty, this is liable to the very same objection as the instance we are now considering.

* * * * * * *

Nay if there were any force at all in the objection it would be stronger in one respect against natural Providence than against Christianity; because under the former we are in many cases commanded, and even necessitated whether we will or no, to suffer for the faults of others, whereas the sufferings of Christ were voluntary.

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Men, by their follies, run themselves into extreme distress, into difficulties which would be absolutely fatal to them were it not for the interposition and assistance of others. God commands by the law of nature that we afford them this assistance in many cases where we cannot do it

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without very great pains and labour and suffering to ourselves. And we see in what a variety of ways one person's sufferings contribute to the relief of another..... And being familiarized to this, men are not shocked with it....."

The objectors then "do not consider God's settled and uniform appointments as His appointments at all: or else they forget that vicarious punishment is a providential appointment of every day's experience; and then, from their being unacquainted with the more general laws of nature or divine government over the world, and not seeing how the sufferings of Christ could contribute to the redemption of it unless by arbitrary and tyrannical will, they conclude His sufferings could not contribute to it any other way. And yet what has been often alleged in justification of this doctrine even from the apparent natural tendency of this method of our redemption, its tendency to vindicate the authority of God's laws and deter His creatures from sin; this has never yet been answered, and is I think plainly unanswerable, though I am far from thinking it an account of the whole of the case."

If at any time men suffer for the faults of others, those faults are the occasion of such suffering. But a tempest, a fire, or a flood, even a peculiar state of weather, may cause suffering.

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At some time or other of their life all men have endured affliction. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards."* Whether then the faults of others, or a tempest, or a fire, or a flood be the cause of suffering, still suffering is produced, and the question occurs, In what way ought the certainty of mankind being afflicted to modify our notions of the course and constitution of nature? Now the Scripture justifies this infliction of pain by various reasons, open indeed to examination, but which it is not necessary for our present purpose to discuss. In regard to the general principle then, we have at least some† explanation. So in the case of Christ's sufferings we may at all events perceive their "tendency to vindicate the authority of God's laws and to deter His creatures from sin," even though it be admitted that this is far from being "an account of the whole of the case."

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* Job v. 7.

† I say *some* explanation, because it is of course admitted that at present "we see through a glass darkly." Meantime, on what ground can we complain, unless we can shew a title to further knowledge? What folly is it to reject the good which is offered (for "all things," even afflictions, "work together for good to them that love God," Rom. viii. 28), because we are not able to comprehend the mysteries of Divine Providence! Is not God too, by right, supreme in His own world?

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On the whole then, taking into consideration what has been quoted from Butler, we may I think thus briefly conclude: Our ignorance and incompetency to judge prevent us from admitting any objection in principle to the propriety of Christ's vicarious though voluntary sacrifice: on the other hand, the principle of vicarious suffering is agreeable to the course and constitution of nature: vicarious suffering after all is but a portion of the sufferings to which men are subjected: being familiarized to this course and constitution of nature and to these sufferings, we are at least not shocked by them: a reason which has often been alleged in justification of Christ's vicarious suffering, is manifested to our minds; just as some explanation is afforded with respect to the sufferings of mankind in general: and there may be reasons proper to be alleged in justification of the sufferings of Christ, though they be concealed from us; in the same manner as reasons now urged in justification of the sufferings of mankind in general were concealed, or at least but partially explained, before the promulgation of the Gospel.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ANOTHER most important truth revealed to us in Holy Scripture, is that of the preventing and cooperating grace of God's Holy Spirit.* The natural taint and corruption of man have been already considered. Of himself he is altogether insufficient for the discharge of the duties proposed to him. "Not that we are sufficient to think any thing as of ourselves," writes St Paul.† That duties then should be assigned to man, and that he should have no power to fulfil them, would seem absurd, unless in some manner or other power was seasonably given or attainable. Accordingly a thing altogether undiscoverable

* "We cannot perceive any improbability that the Being who originally framed the wondrous fabric (*i.e.* the mind of man) may thus hold intercourse with it, and provide a remedy for its moral disorders: and thus a statement such as human reason never could have anticipated, comes to us invested with every element of credibility and of truth." (Abercrombie, Intellect. Powers.)

† 2 Cor. iii. 5.

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by human sagacity,* is revealed to us; that is to say, there being a Holy Ghost or Spirit of God, this Holy Spirit does in some mysterious manner afford us the supply of strength which is needed.† "Our sufficiency is of God."‡ "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure."‖ "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."§ "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh

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* "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." (Acts xix. 2.)

† After the position of man had been altered by the sin of Adam, God gave the dispensation of Christianity as supplemental to natural religion, which was now insufficient. For the establishment of this dispensation He suspended or altered the laws of nature, *i. e.* His own laws. To supply the wants then "of the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain," He who made the world exercised power thereon. Similarly having made the mind of man, He influences it, and so supplies its wants.

We have seen above (note, p. 206) what Butler remarks in regard to the conscience: "Had it strength as it had right, had it power as it had manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world." Here then is implied the natural weakness of man—a truth indeed discoverable by mere human sagacity. Scripture however discloses the doctrine of Divine grace, the appointed remedy. Thus the speculations of philosophy may tend to prepare our minds for the reception of the Gospel; and we have links connecting the things observed by men with the things revealed by God.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 5. ‖ Phil. ii. 13. § 1 Cor. xii. 3.

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down from the Father of lights."* Even in regard to knowledge St. Paul writes, "We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. . . . . The natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned."† Accordingly on these and similar texts our Church builds her tenth Article: "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." What then is the trial herein implied? Is it not this—Whether man will stubbornly resist, or suffer himself to be led by the Holy Spirit, and with ready obedience do what is proposed to him, in subordination to the divine influences? Whether he will carry out to their accomplishment those principles, of which the first motion and

* James i. 17.

† 1 Cor. ii. 12 and 14. In connexion with this subject, it may be well to meditate upon the declaration of our Saviour, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.)

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continued approbation and support are from God? "Work out your own salvation (says St. Paul) with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* There is good reason for "fear and trembling," for God may withdraw His divine aid, if proper use is not made of it; if we are remiss and negligent, and thus provoke the Giver. Such withdrawal would be but agreeable to what is implied in the parable of the Talents, as well as expressly declared at the end of it: "From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."† Besides, not only does Holy Scripture inculcate a general principle respecting consequences which follow the neglect of God's good gifts; not only does it warn us that there are various depths of alienation from our great Creator: but it especially contemplates that men may resist,‡ grieve,‖ even quench§ the Divine Spirit in their hearts, of course by determined and stubborn opposition to His sanctifying influences.

Jeremy Taylor thus describes a state of spiritual hardness: "He that shall discourse Euclid's Elements to a swine, or preach (as Venerable

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* Phil. ii. 13. † Matth. xxvi. ‡ Acts vii. 51.
‖ Eph. iv. 30. § 1 Thess. v. 19.

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Bede's story reports of him) to a rock, or talk metaphysics to a boar, will as much prevail upon his assembly as St. Peter and St. Paul could do upon uncircumcised hearts and ears, upon the indisposed Greeks and uncircumcised Jews. An ox will relish the tender flesh of kids with as much gust and appetite, as an unspiritual and unsanctified man will do the discourses of angels or of an apostle, if he should come to preach the secrets of the gospel. How many times doth God speak to us, by his servants the prophets, by His Son, by His apostles, by sermons, by spiritual books, by thousands of homilies, and arts of counsel and insinuation; and we sit as unconcerned as the pillars of a church, and hear the sermons as the Athenians did a story, or as we read a gazette."

It has been seen that a person is moved by the preventing influence of the Holy Spirit to do the will of God. But it is the will of God that we should continually pray: and it is our especial duty to pray for the assistance of the Holy Spirit. God too has promised to grant the petitions of those who ask in His Son's name. When therefore moved by the Spirit, we thus pray for fresh supplies of spiritual strength, God no doubt will grant our prayers.* Moreover

* See Luke xi. 13.

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men are commanded duly to use the other appointed means of obtaining grace: influenced by the Spirit, they obey these commands; and so obtain new spiritual benefits. Thus then, the Spirit perpetually moving them to do those things by which they obtain additional grace, and their minds being ever intent upon spiritual improvement, they continually grow in grace.* All this again exactly coincides with what is conveyed in the parable of the Talents: "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance."

It is plain that on the one hand, the doctrines of Divine grace present an awful warning to the obstinately profligate: for if the Spirit after so much resistance be finally quenched within them, they have no power of their own to adopt principles and conduct acceptable to God; and therefore how shall they escape condemnation? So again on the other hand, these doctrines are full of comfort to men whose principles and behaviour are in the main good, but who sometimes, through human infirmity (for "in many

* The doctrine of constant growth in grace is recognised in the Confirmation service of our Church: "Defend, O Lord, this thy child with thy heavenly grace; that he may continue thine for ever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto thy everlasting kingdom."

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things we offend all"*) are led astray from the clear line of duty. Such backslidings are assuredly a cause of serious pain to those whose aim is perpetually to advance in the course of self-improvement; and who, after the example of St. Paul, "reach forth unto those things that are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."† On the occasion of such lapses, they are led to fear how far they may thus have become alienated from God, counted unworthy of their Christian profession, and liable to be deprived of that Divine grace, of which they so well understand the value. But though considerations of the doctrine of grace produce this pain, doubtless a salutary and it may be not an undeserved pain; still further reflection and experience tend to heal their wounds. Not only is there the general source of comfort, viz. that some allowance is made for human weakness, and that no man ever yet, save the man Jesus Christ, was perfect: but also particular consolation arises to particular individuals, from reflections upon the doctrine of grace, the very source in which some of their sharpest pangs may have originated: for as they review their

* James iii. 2. † Philip. iii. 13, 14.

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past lives, they find that even after their backsliding, they have been led to the performance of good actions, directed to the glory of God, with a deep sense of religion, and upon honest motives of faith in Christ and determined obedience. Now "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves: our sufficiency is of God."* "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure."† Has the Spirit of God then altogether and for ever forsaken them, in consequence of a fault, though possibly a grievous one? Nay more, has not evidence been afforded of His subsequent operation? Considerations of religion thus bruise indeed for a time, but afterwards heal. They stimulate us for our good, and the good being wrought, console. Thus the medicines of a wise physician, though nauseous possibly to the taste, and weakening to the body, do nevertheless remove the disease: and so after a time enable the body to exert itself with increased vigour and energy. Both in matters concerning the soul and concerning the body of man, the dispensations are primarily from God: and therefore what wonder is it if they exhibit a close resemblance and analogy?

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* 2 Cor. iii. 5. † Philip. ii. 13.

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Say then that the Holy Spirit thus remains with a man: that though daily trespasses be committed, still the Spirit of God also perpetually moves him, and he obeys those divine motions by the performance of good works: say that his faith and love are thus evinced, and that he ever desires, though he be never able actually to reach perfection, and so the Spirit is with him to his death: it is worth while to observe what are the expressions of Scripture respecting such a person. He is said to be sealed with the Spirit unto the day of redemption:* to have the earnest of the Spirit:† "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession."‡ "God hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."‖

To revert again to what has been said above.§ All this doctrine of spiritual assistance is mysterious; *i.e.* our unassisted natural reason is not able to shew us anything at all about the matter. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."¶ It is our

* Eph. iv. 30. † 2 Cor. v. 5. ‡ Eph. i. 14.
‖ 2 Cor. i. 22. § B. IV. c. i. & iii. ¶ John iii. 8.

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duty to believe the doctrine because it is revealed: and herein is a trial of our faith. This too is in unison with those other dealings of God to man which may be termed mysterious. Neither, if we consider the reasons which have been mentioned above, is it calculated to excite surprise.

It may be remarked further, that Christians have no reason whatever to expect that the ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost should be marked by any vehemently exciting movements, or as it were sudden gusts of passion and desire; as enthusiasts are apt to fancy. Such symptoms are probably rather the effects of an overheated or distempered imagination. The work of the Spirit is shewn by its fruits; "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."*

* Gal. v. 22.

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CHAPTER V.

OF TRUST IN GOD.

It may be well at this stage briefly to consider, what indeed has heretofore been touched upon, viz. the important principle of trust in God.

As regards the first dispensation, previous to the fall of Adam, man, being the work of a perfect Being of almighty power, infinite wisdom, essential justice, would naturally be suited to his circumstances, and capable of accomplishing the objects, and obeying the law, which he was destined to accomplish and to obey. Either then at his first creation, or subsequently in the course of events, as occasion required, power would be given him to act suitably to any position in which he might be placed, and thus to fulfil his destiny. The character therefore of the Creator, and the relation begun by creation, and continually recognised in a kind preservation, might shew to man a sure foundation of trust in God.

But, as we have seen, the ties of the first dispensation were broken. By transgression man

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placed himself in a situation of unnatural alienation from God. Where was now his title to favour and protection?

What would be the operation of principles? Antecedently to all knowledge of Christianity, would a sincere conviction of sin lead to the conclusion, that God was made our implacable enemy? Or even that the connexion between God and man was so utterly dissolved, that it could on no terms be renewed? On no conditions could He condescend to shew us favour? On no principles to consider us again as His own?

If such propositions were asserted, it is certain they could not be proved. Those who asserted them would be presuming to judge without sufficient evidence. What if the sin of man, such as he is, related to God such as God is, merits punishment, and it is altogether proper and necessary that man should be punished, have we any means of determining the severity of the retribution? Are there no degrees of punishment? None which may be called secondary and inferior?

But if we considered what we had observed of the ordinary course of nature, how would the case stand then? Bishop Butler may again enlighten us upon this point. "We may observe, somewhat much to the present purpose, in the

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constitution of nature, or appointments of Providence, the provision which is made, that all the bad natural consequences of men's actions should not always actually follow; or that such bad consequences as, according to the settled course of things, would inevitably have followed, if not prevented, should in certain degrees be prevented. We are apt presumptuously to imagine, that the world might have been so constituted, as that there would not have been any such thing as misery or evil. On the contrary, we find the Author of Nature permits it: but then He has provided reliefs, and in many cases perfect remedies for it, after some pains and difficulties; reliefs and remedies even for that evil which is the fruit of our own misconduct; and which in the course of nature would have continued and ended in our destruction, but for such remedies. And this is an instance both of severity and of indulgence in the constitution of nature. Thus all the bad consequences, now mentioned, of a man's trifling upon a precipice, might be prevented. And though all were not, some of them might, by proper interposition if not rejected; by another's coming to the rash man's relief, with his own laying hold on that relief, in such sort as the case required. Persons may do a great deal themselves towards prevent-

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ing the bad consequences of their follies; and more may be done by themselves, together with the assistance of others their fellow-creatures; which assistance nature requires and prompts us to. This is the general constitution of the world.

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"That provision is made by nature, that we may and do to so great a degree prevent the bad natural effects of our follies: this may be called mercy or compassion in the original constitution of the world; compassion, as distinguished from goodness in general. And the whole known constitution and course of things, affording us instances of such compassion, it would be according to the analogy of nature to hope, that, however ruinous the natural consequences of vice might be, from the general laws of God's government over the universe; yet provision might be made, possibly might originally have been made, for preventing those ruinous consequences from inevitably following; at least from following universally, and in all cases."*

But again: after the fall of Adam, a man living in the world, though ignorant of revelation, might still observe that God preserves and sustains men, giving them fruitful seasons and rain from heaven:

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* Butler's Anal., Part II. c. v.

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and thus the Almighty not only created us, but also supplies us with things good and suitable to our condition. It might be remarked too, that reason, God's light within us, continually directs our path: even among heathen nations, though in a variety of ways altogether sinful before God, there were yet eminent teachers of morality and virtue: there was exhibited in many cases an ardent love of truth, justice, benevolence. Consider only the minds of Homer, Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Plato, Virgil, Cicero. Is it possible to conceive that such men, or even those who profited by their instructions, could be utterly hateful and abominable in the sight of God?

Moreover, if we look at various relations of human life, which are evidently types and representations however inadequate of the relation between God and man, we perceive that a fault or delinquency on the part of an inferior is not necessarily followed by a dissolution of the connexion between him and his superior. This indeed may be the extreme result of many and great offences; still it is preceded by admonitions, rebukes, strong remonstrances, all sorts of secondary punishments. Consider the most remarkable and conspicuous representations of the relation between God and man. What forbearance, readi-

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ness to pardon, compassion, considerate kindness, indulgence, is continually exhibited by a parent to even a wayward child! How patiently does he abide the day of reformation. The parable of the prodigal son strongly affects our minds. And why? Because it is so true to nature.

Thus then, though sensitive minds may be apt to imagine that sin has broken off the connexion between God and man, still let us remember that this is but an imagination unsupported by proof. On the other hand, the truth of Butler's remarks and their bearing upon the question are manifest: God's continual preservation of man, too, is an evidence that in spite of sin the connexion is not severed; and this evidence is strengthened by examples of human virtue prior to the knowledge of Christianity: as has been seen in the earlier part of this volume, we acknowledge the law of nature written in our hearts; and how would God give a law to those from whom He was utterly severed? Moreover we continually see types of the relation between God and man: becoming acquainted with the course of nature, *i. e.* the divine economy and government, under certain circumstances, we are hence led to hope that it may be similar in other circumstances which are the antitype. On the whole therefore, thus free from preliminary objections,

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and prepared gladly to admit whatever may confirm our natural and not unreasonable desires, we at length proceed to the consideration of what is revealed.

Admitting revelation then, we apply its doctrines as a test by which to try the principle of confidence in God. Accordingly, being in a state of repentance and (in spite of the objection derived from sin) of covenant with God through Christ, we find that we have now a new title on which to trust in God.

For the question at issue depends simply upon this, What are the terms of the covenant? Now in the first place Scripture confirms what is acknowledged by our natural conscience, and represents God as a Lawgiver and King. Not only feeling therefore that the connexion is not severed, but being assured by authority that we are His subjects and servants, we hence derive principles of trust. For lawgivers and kings do, according to the ordinary course of human affairs, protect and defend their subjects. When such a relation was exhibited in Scripture as that between God and man, it must have been designed that we should derive our apprehensions of the relation from what we observe in the daily intercourse of mankind. But in addition to what we are taught by our natural faculties, God is

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frequently represented to us in the New Testament under the character of a Father, a reconciled Father it is true, still a Father: not as if the connexion was, or might easily be, broken off; on the contrary, it is expressly and emphatically marked, "Our Father, which art in heaven": and surely redemption from the worst of slaveries, that of sin, by great suffering and humiliation was especially paternal. The relation then eminently justifies confidence. Children trust and must trust their parents. It is the law of Providence given them to obey. They do it naturally, and as it were instinctively. But again, these ordinary notions of what a Father would probably do for His children, are confirmed by express invitations, exhortations, and promises of Scripture, on which, as we believe the truth of God, we may confidently rely. Lastly we have practical experience (as indeed in some measure, agreeably to our former remarks, had even the heathen), how God actually does deal with men; how He sustains and preserves that world and those creatures whom He made and redeemed: and we know also what He has done and still does for us in regard to our spiritual welfare. In these respects, therefore, He not only fulfils all expectations which may have been held out; but such fulfilment affords additional evidence on which to trust Him for the future.

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Confidence in God, then, is a great principle of human conduct. It is altogether fit and right that we should entertain and cherish this principle: and it leads to the most salutary and beneficial results, *i. e.* the tranquillizing and confirming our minds amid the pains and difficulties of life, and the casting our care upon Him who is both able and willing to bear it.

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CHAPTER VI.

CONSIDERATIONS RESPECTING THE FUTURE JUDGMENT.

We have seen that the certainty of a Future Judgment is established by evidence of an irresistible character. But the duration of this life is short and uncertain, and the future involves the consideration of eternity: "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."* The mind of man, therefore, being fully impressed with a sense of religion and of the immeasurable importance of future as compared with all present objects, is naturally prone to propose to itself the following questions: first, What will be the exact rule and measure by which the ultimate award will be determined at the day of judgment? secondly, What will be the nature of that happiness and misery which shall be assigned to the righteous and the wicked respectively?

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* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

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We are thus perhaps sometimes led curiously to pry into minute details, and to require more specific information than has been afforded.

With respect to such particulars, the knowledge of heathen nations was, as we have seen, none, or next to none. They had but an indistinct perception of the truth of there being a future judgment at all. Though the comparatively bright light of revelation has shone upon us, still see what St. Paul himself writes in regard to the imperfection of that light, "Now we see through a glass darkly." The whole passage, in which he looks forward to the full development of the counsels of God, is the following: "We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know, even as also I am known."*

So then our knowledge in regard to the future is more than was given to the heathen, less than will hereafter be given to us.

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* 1 Cor. xiii.

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Accordingly, whatever may be our wish to understand precise details, God has not thought fit to grant more than the knowledge of certain grand general principles; with the exact working out and issues of which we shall not be fully acquainted in the present life. Since this is the scheme appointed by God, we may be well assured that it is a wise and good scheme. On the one hand indeed it is perfectly right that we should, with all humility and reverence, endeavour fully to understand and appreciate whatever God has taught us either by reason or revelation. Yet, on the other hand, if it be clear that He designs us at present to remain in a state of comparative ignorance even in regard to matters of great importance, it is our business contentedly to acquiesce in this as in all other arrangements of Providence. We must accommodate ourselves to our position; repress what, after an intimation of design on God's part, might be termed immodest and impertinent curiosity in us; not distract our minds and waste our energies, by giving scope to a restless imagination and aiming at things unattainable; but diligently attend to the discharge of our duties. Be the ultimate issues and consequences of things what they may, where we have no control we have no responsibility: accordingly we cannot say that we in

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reality need this bright light and knowledge which we are so apt to crave. Our duties, however, lie plainly in our path, and are quite sufficient to claim all the power and demand the whole zeal of man.

The Deity then, while He always affords us clear knowledge for the guidance of our conduct as moral agents, has given us that light which He has given, and no more, in regard to our destiny as immortal beings. This arrangement is not only, no doubt, wise and good because it is His arrangement; but it is also altogether similar to the dispensation under which man finds himself placed, if he looks merely to the usual progress of temporal affairs, and the conduct proper for him to adopt with reference to such affairs. How continually, as moral agents, are we placed in situations, in which we see that various principles will operate, some perhaps counteracting the efficacy of others, others assisting and increasing the energy of these latter: though we distinctly perceive that the whole result of things will depend upon the operation of such principles, yet our faculties will not enable us to determine with what amount of power each will work; and we are consequently unable to foresee what will be the precise effect produced. It is time alone which at length develops the event. Meanwhile

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we have usually light enough to guide our conduct. We see pretty plainly what is the path of duty. Accordingly our uncertainty as to results need not in reality embarrass and fetter our actions.

More particularly in regard to the satisfactions and enjoyments which, it is supposed, will arise from the attainment of certain objects after that attainment has been effected. We are convinced it may be, generally, that such and such temporal objects are worthy of pursuit, good. But though we follow the course of action necessary for the attainment, still we cannot see beforehand the exact nature of the good to be obtained, the whole amount of pleasure, the precise quantity of what may be termed alloy, inseparable from all earthly enjoyments. These things can only be thoroughly known by experience; though in the mean time we have general principles of sufficient power to direct our conduct. Similarly the more particular details of a future state are concealed from our minds; yet enough is shewn to regulate our behaviour.

Again, if more light was given, who shall say that the roving imagination of man would not still be disposed to pry beyond the knowledge vouchsafed, and to thirst for more than the Creator had thought fit to grant? If knowledge

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be not unbounded, why should a restless mind be satisfied with one limit rather than another? But in truth, on what ground do we complain of God for not giving clearer light than He has given, any more than for not having made us in other respects different from what He has made us? For not having furnished us with wings, as He has the birds, to carry us through the air? For not having endowed our bodies with the strength of the lion, or our feet with the swiftness of the horse?

All this however is mere trifling. For, instead of having just causes of complaint, we have innumerable arguments for gratitude.

Nevertheless, what may tend further to repress vain longings, or at all events to console men (if they need consolation) under the want of brighter light, is this, viz. that as is knowledge, so is responsibility. The faculties we possess, the knowledge we acquire may be considered as instruments by which we are placed on our moral trial. As the instruments vary, so does the nature of the trial. If we had more light than we have, such trial would be different from what it is. It has pleased God to subject us to that to which He has subjected us, assuredly upon such principles as are suitable to His glorious character, though they be concealed from us. Undoubtedly

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if we gave the reins to our fancy, we might suppose that ideas of future misery or happiness might be impressed upon our minds in more vivid or even glaring characters than any of which we have experience: the various effects of particular transgressions might be represented to us much more forcibly than they are: more specific details of the proceedings at the day of judgment might possibly be exhibited to our view. But if this were done, more might reasonably be expected from us in the eyes of a just Judge. Just as more may be expected from us as a class and body of men, than from heathen nations: more again from those among us who have had the advantages of leisure and learning, than from those to whom such opportunities have been denied. Thus our Saviour Himself confirms what is dictated by the natural sense of justice inherent in mankind: "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."*

* Luke xii. 47. See also Matth. xi. 21, 22.

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On grounds such as these then, cheerfully acquiescing in the concealment that is ordained by God, still let us remember certain great principles, of which the knowledge is granted. Let us indeed abstain from endeavouring to intrude (which after all would be but a vain attempt) into what is intended to be secret, and from assuming (which would be bold irreverence, and would exhibit a mind tinctured with falsehood) what we are not justified in assuming: let us however take heed to understand, and accept, and carefully apply what is given: let us ever bear in mind, that our trial, though not according to what we have not, is according to what we have; of which therefore it behoves us duly to avail ourselves.

The important question then is this: It being supposed that a man sincerely wishes to be allowed a share in the benefits of Christ's death, and to obtain the favour of God at the day of judgment, what ought to be his principles and his practice in the present life?

We will confine ourselves to a brief statement of certain general principles.

In the first place, since man is naturally prone to sin, and actually does sin, Repentance is necessary. "I shall use no other arguments (writes Jeremy Taylor) to move a sinner to

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repentance, but to tell him unless he does he shall certainly perish; and if he does repent timely and entirely, that is live a holy life, he shall be forgiven and be saved." He then declares that the admission of mankind to repentance* and pardon was a favour greater than ever God gave to the angels and devils: he enlarges upon the sufferings of Christ, endured to give us an opportunity of repentance; upon His prayers, and the joy felt "in heaven over one sinner that repenteth:" he represents the glorious rewards of heaven, the lightness of Christ's burden, the easiness of His yoke: and "If these motives (he concludes), joined together with our own interest even as much as felicity, and the sight of God, and the avoiding the intolerable pains of hell and many intermedial judgments come to, will not

* It may be observed, that the doctrine of God being willing to receive penitent sinners, can only be known by revelation. If God has a right to the devoted obedience of our whole lives, and we at any time defraud Him of a part thereof, our natural powers can give us no assurance that sorrow for sin and resolutions of amendment will cancel the account of the past. In the common course of human affairs, a determination to contract no new debts, will not wipe away existing obligations. "The doctrine of the Gospel (says Butler) appears to be, not only that Christ taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy which it is by what He did and suffered for us."

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move us to leave (1) the filthiness, and (2) the trouble, and (3) the uneasiness, and (4) the unreasonableness of sin, and turn to God, there is no more to be said: we must perish in our folly.'

Again, Faith is indispensable. For this our Saviour continually trains the minds of men, by insisting upon faith before He performs His miracles. Thus to the woman of Canaan He exclaims, "Great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."* So again to His disciples, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you."† Thus to the woman who had touched Him, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole."‡ "And when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, Fear not; believe only, and she shall be made whole."‖ Here is, at all events, a preparation to receive such texts as the following: "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."§ "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."¶ "This

* Matth. xv. 28. † Luke xvii. 6. ‡ Ibid. viii. 48.
‖ Luke viii. 50. § John xx. 29. ¶ Rom. x. 10.

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is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ."* But the whole of the New Testament abounds in passages inculcating the necessity of faith.

Faith, however, shewing itself by works is required. "Good works, which are the fruits of faith, ... do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit."† St. James tells us, "Faith without works is dead." "The devils believe and tremble." But "I will shew thee my faith by my works."‡ Accordingly, St. Paul has the comprehensive expression, "Faith that worketh by love."‖ As if the mind being convinced of certain truths, as the creation, preservation, and redemption of men, and therefore cherishing proper feelings of gratitude and love, should thence be induced to work, to obey God's law, to do whatever it might conceive acceptable in His sight. But Faith, Hope, and Charity are given by St. Paul as great principles of human conduct.§ Now though "the greatest of these is charity" or love, still it is altogether a portion of the spirit of Scripture, that to the idea of faith

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* 1 John iii. 23. † Article XII. of our Church.
‡ James ii. ‖ Gal. v. 6. § 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

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working by love we join what would be conveyed in the notion of faith working by hope.* For

* Our minds are duly prepared to entertain the ideas of faith working by love, and faith working by hope: for we have already recognised the sense of duty and the desire of happiness as rational principles of human action. See note, p. 184.

St. James tells us, "The devils believe and tremble." Here is faith indeed and fear, but despair. "Despair (remarks Taylor) belongs only to passionate fools or villains (such as were Ahithophel and Judas), or else to devils and damned persons." A man, however, who has been leading a wicked life is sometimes moved to reflection by severe pain. He shrinks from suffering, and for consolation betakes himself (suppose) to religion. The first struggles of his mind include possibly a mixture of fear and hope. Fear is perhaps the stronger: and his hope is not so much to obtain the good as to avoid the evil. We easily comprehend the notion of faith working by fear. In course of time suppose him to progress, so that faith working by hope may at length be considered the characteristic principle. In endeavouring to obey God's commands, he will earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit, for such prayer is part of this obedience. Conceive him then to obtain fresh supplies of grace. We know that the fruit of the Spirit is love, (Gal. v. 22). Accordingly he may thus advance to a state of faith working by love. In Scripture we read of faithful servants of God: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," (Matth. xxv. 21). But there is a higher elevation than this, the love of sons. In a future state we may ascend still further: for faith shall be exchanged for knowledge, and the spirits of just men shall be perfected. (Hebr. xii. 23.)

It has been seen (note, p. 184) that though we consider "regard to our good on the whole" and "regard to duty" as

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the mind being assured that there shall hereafter be a day of judgment, would naturally cherish feelings of hope; would so be induced to work, looking to the "things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

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rational principles in man, still when we speak with philosophical accuracy we must exhibit their distinguishing features. Nevertheless, agreeably to what has been just said, it would seem that a man who really acts upon the lower principle may in due time proceed to the full recognition of the higher. Human life is indeed a school of discipline. The mind of man experiences continual transitions, and is thus gradually purified and perfected.

It seems therefore unwise to discourage men's minds by unnecessarily disparaging the lower principle. Thus I conceive it might be better not to speak of it as "a low mercenary species of virtue," or of a man "being bribed to do his duty." (See Reid.) According to common usage, these terms convey a harsh meaning. Scripture, being intended for general edification, holds out motives which may be effectual upon men of different temperaments and various shades of moral feeling; and it seems but right that such motives should fairly and without prejudice operate upon the minds of those to whom they are addressed.

Even when a man has ascended to the high principle of zealous love to God, and thereon has founded his obedience, it is still a source of satisfaction and joy to reflect that he is thus promoting his own true happiness. These reflections too are an additional guarantee for his obedience. Imperfect creatures may well acquiesce, or rather rejoice in such security.

* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

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Good works are continually enjoined in Scripture. But from the very nature of the case faith is understood. "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."* If he believes not that God is, how can he come unto Him? Cornelius was "a devout man and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."† Though brought up as a Gentile, he had imbibed right ideas of the character of the Deity, and he shewed his faith by his acts. So St. James says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" And presently afterwards, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness."‡

In the words of Burnet, we must "receive Christ as a Prophet to teach, and a King to rule, as well as a Priest to save us." His law includes a repetition of the law of nature. Obeying the commands of Christ we shew tokens of our faith in Him. Again, "Does not the duty," asks Butler, "of religious regards to the Son and to the Spirit immediately arise to the view of

* Heb. xi. 6. † Acts. x. 2. ‡ James ii.

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reason out of the very nature of their offices and relations" to men? These religious regards then, "reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope,"* imply faith in what is revealed. Without faith they cannot even exist. Positive precepts too are delivered in Scripture. When persons are baptized, when the Supper of the Lord is received,† the commands of Christ are obeyed, and to this obedience faith is a necessary preliminary.

"The Spirit helpeth our infirmities."‡ "Whatsoever we do in word or deed," St. Paul bids us "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."‖ He enjoins us also to "do all to the glory of God."§ "We believe in God, we believe also in Christ."¶ However, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."** Again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."††

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* Butler's Anal., Part. II. chap. I. See the whole chapter.

† In the Catechism of our Church, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord are considered as "generally necessary to salvation." An account is also given of benefits conveyed.

‡ Rom. viii. 26. See above, Book IV. chap. 4.

‖ Col. iii. 17. § 1 Cor. x. 31. ¶ John xiv. 1.

** 1 Cor. xii. 3. †† John iii. 36.

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"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."*

The propositions which Scripture requires us to believe are of course supported by sufficient evidence. It has been the main design of this treatise to investigate the principles which teach us to appreciate moral evidence. A moral certainty is a proper object of faith. We have seen that in the whole course of their daily conduct, men believing that certain things have been, are, will be, are thence by love and hope led to action. This is the dispensation given by God to man. There is a trial even in temporal matters, whether man will believe as he ought: when he has believed, whether he will do as he ought. For example, look to the operation of principles connected with the social duties of mankind. Consider the

* John iii. 5. In our Catechism children are taught to declare that in the articles of the Apostle's Creed they chiefly learn—

(1) To believe in God the Father, Who hath made them and all the world.

(2) In God the Son, Who hath redeemed them and all mankind.

(3) In God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth them and all the elect people of God.

With respect to the doctrines herein asserted or implied, and with respect to the Creeds generally, consult, among other works, Tomline's Elements of Christian Theology and the notes in Mant's Prayer-Book.

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relation of a child to a parent, and the motives of filial duty and affection. A son in the first place acknowledges certain truths. He believes that such a relation as is said to exist, does in reality exist between him and his parent: he is convinced also (say) that his father has been at great trouble, pains, and expense in his maintenance, instruction, and promotion in life; he is aware likewise of his parent's strong affection: and thus he returns the tribute of love and obedience which is due to a great benefactor. He shews the sincerity of his feelings by his acts: and so again we have faith working by love. All this is fit, suitable to the relation of the persons. Again, if a man goes on an embassy to the emperor of China, he must at least believe that such a potentate exists; else how can he with any reason go to him? But in truth he believes this, and much more. And when men eat, drink, ride, walk, dig, sow, reap, build houses, buy property, do any thing, they believe that certain things have been, or are, and that such and such results will or may follow their actions. "Faith (says Jeremy Taylor) makes the merchant diligent and venturous, and that makes him rich. Ferdinando of Arragon believed the story told him by Columbus, and therefore he furnished him with ships, and got the West Indies by his

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faith in the undertaking. But Henry the Seventh of England believed him not; and therefore trusted him not with shipping, and lost all the purchase of that faith." Accordingly we perceive that the untaught savage may even now shew faith by deeds* though ignorant of Christianity. Christianity indeed proposes new objects of faith: still faith may be exercised independently of Scripture: the savage therefore, believing and feeling as he ought, may on any given occasion act properly with reference to his whole position, and to the light which he has. He may act even as did Cornelius upon high principles of religion. But Christ has made "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Who then shall say that the behaviour of a savage, right perhaps in the main though imperfect, may not, even at the day of judgment, be mercifully estimated by Him, who will require from man according to what he had, and not according to what he had not?†

* See p. 174.

† It is not in truth our province to judge, how far the benefits of the Christian dispensation may be extended to those who have not known it. Even in regard to the condition of our neighbours and friends, it behoves us to be very cautious in drawing any conclusions; to consider by what authority, and for what purposes we undertake to judge at all;

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Accordingly, when Scripture declares that God requires a lively and active faith, we perceive that this is not a mere positive appointment of the Christian dispensation; but it involves a principle exhibited to man antecedently to any written revelation, and operating with universal efficacy in all the affairs of human life. Religion extends the principle, and leads us from temporal things to the things that are eternal. According to Reid, "joy and sorrow, hope and fear imply a belief of good or ill, either present or in expectation. Esteem, gratitude, pity, and resentment imply a belief of certain qualities in their objects. In every action that is done for an end there must be a belief of its tendency to that end. So large a share has belief in our intellectual operations, in our active principles, and in our actions themselves, that as faith in things divine

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and to recollect the imperfection of our own knowledge and faculties.

Perhaps no two cases are entirely like, and men's spiritual conditions may vary as much as the features and expression of their countenances. Our wisdom then will be shewn in attending to what we know best, and what directly concerns us, our own case.

Accordingly, when our Saviour is asked (Luke xiii. 23) "Lord are there few that be saved?" He gives no direct answer; but urges what is calculated to impress on the inquirer the necessity of minding his own business, and taking care that he be not found among "the workers of iniquity."

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is represented as the mainspring in the life of a Christian, so belief in general is the mainspring in the life of a man." Thus our ordinary experience duly prepares and trains our minds. We observe three conditions of man: we contemplate him as merely engaged in temporal affairs, and connected with his fellow-men; as a religious being unenlightened by Christianity; as a well-instructed Christian: and in all these relations, and in their results, we find that there is evidently implied one and the same leading principle.

Our trials in this life have various stages, in any of which we may fail or succeed. Belief is a mental act, in regard to which we are responsible. Again, we may or may not direct our conduct suitably to our belief. Further, we may or may not persevere to the end. Such is our condition both in regard to what are called temporal interests, and also with reference to what we at once acknowledge to be immediately connected with the considerations of a future state. These trials naturally imply hazard and danger. "Had we not experience (observes Butler) it might perhaps speciously be urged, that it is improbable that any kind of hazard and danger should be put upon us by an infinite Being; when every thing which is hazard and

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danger in our manner of conception, and will end in error, confusion, and misery, is now already certain in His foreknowledge. And indeed why anything of hazard and danger should be put upon such frail creatures as we are, may well be thought a difficulty in speculation; and cannot but be so, until we know the whole, or however much more of the case. But still the constitution of nature is as it is."* The principles to be fully recognised and carried out at the day of judgment, are those of which we continually see indications in the course of nature as at present established. No complaint can lie against the Lawgiver in regard to the principle of His dispensation: it may be easily conceived that we simply know not all the circumstances which made such a dispensation, what it no doubt is seeing from whom it proceeded, altogether fit and proper to be established.

When we consider the purity of God's law, and the account hereafter to be given, our hearts, conscious of errors, faults, delinquencies, backslidings, are apt to be dismayed. Yet the dispensation was intended for creatures fallible and frail as men.

On the whole then, what view may we reason-

* Butler's Anal. Part. I. c. iv. See above pp. 172, 173.

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ably take of our position? Though God be gracious, merciful, long-suffering; yet is it not clear from the whole tenor of Scripture, that there is *some* amount of sin, *some* degree of malice, which may cut us off entirely from His favour? For the Holy Spirit may, as we have seen, be quenched: a restoration may thus be rendered impossible, for without the Spirit we can do nothing: and so we may be left naked and undefended at the day of account. Jeremy Taylor writes thus in regard to the day of judgment: "If now the anger of God make such terrible eruptions upon the wicked people that delight in sin, how great may we suppose that anger to be, how severe that judgment, how terrible that vengeance, how intolerable those inflictions, which God reserves for the full effusion of indignation on the great day of vengeance."....."For so did the Libyan lion, that was brought up under discipline, and taught to endure blows, and eat the meat of order and regular provision, and to suffer gentle usages and the familiarities of societies: but once he brake out into his own wilderness, "Dedidicit pacem subito feritate reversâ," and killed two Roman boys. But those that forage in the Libyan mountains, tread down and devour all that they meet or master; and when they have fasted two days, lay up an anger great as is their appetite,

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and bring certain death to all that can be overcome. God is pleased to compare Himself to a lion: and though in this life He hath confined Himself with promises and gracious emanations of an infinite goodness, and limits Himself by conditions and covenants, and suffers Himself to be overcome by prayers, and Himself hath invented ways of atonement and expiation: yet when He is provoked by our unhandsome and unworthy actions, He makes sudden breaches, and tears some of us in pieces; and of others He breaks their bones, or affrights their hopes and secular gaieties, and fills their house with mourning, and cypress, and groans, and death: but when this Lion of the tribe of Judah shall appear upon His own mountain, the mountain of the Lord, in His natural dress of majesty, and that justice shall have her chain and golden fetters taken off, then justice shall strike and mercy shall not hold her hands: she shall strike sore strokes, and pity shall not break the blow." These ideas may well terrify the wicked. Still do not tender consciences need consolation? Does not the sense of frequent lapses make us perhaps too prone to fear* that we have lost the favour of God, and are, as it were, given over to the enemy?

* See pp. 284, 285, 294.

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How then are these difficulties to be reconciled, so that, on the one hand, men may be deterred from sin by the fear of terrible punishment; on the other may not be utterly dejected, while God is still willing to receive them?

In the first place, then, be it always remembered that God will deal equitably with all His creatures. That only will be expected which a man might well have been able to accomplish. God "knoweth whereof we are made, He remembereth that we are but dust."* Again, our faculties are so imperfect that we cannot accurately judge even of the malignity of our own offences. We cannot pronounce what amount of grief any particular sin may cause to the Holy Ghost. "There is a sin (says St. John) unto death:"† and we may easily conceive ten thousand times ten thousand shades of less deep virulence and malignity. Our ignorance may be more clearly understood if we contrast it with the knowledge of God, Who alone can determine the guilt of any particular offence. He remembers our whole history from our birth up to the minute of the transgression. He estimates the strength of the temptation, the frequency with which it may have been repeated, the efforts, if any, with which resisted. Thus

* Ps. ciii. 14.

† 1 John v. 16.

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then, though our ignorance be great, it at least leaves us free to infer the dreadful danger of the deliberate and habitual sinner. On the other hand, in our state of darkness we see nothing to take away the consolation which is sometimes so much needed. And the declarations of Scripture, joined to his own recollections of the past, certainly do afford, to a truly religious man, that by which he may at least chase away despondency.

For it is evidently the whole spirit of the Gospel, that the heart repenting of former sin, and honestly believing what is revealed, should make it a uniform purpose and endeavour to live agreeably to the laws of God. If then there was at any time a failure in duty, such failure might naturally be followed by sincere sorrow, renewed zeal, redoubled vigilance, prayer for victory in future temptations. "Ye sorrowed (writes St. Paul) after a godly sort: what carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge!" * Thus a man's character might be continually improved and strengthened: though he would be unable to obtain perfection in his

* 2 Cor. vi. 11.

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present state, yet might he perpetually approach to such perfection: accordingly, numerous good deeds performed, in spite of some occasional admixture of error, omission, delinquency, offence, might give evidence* of the source from which they proceeded, viz. the Spirit of God dwelling in his heart and inciting him to action. Thus then he being, according to the words of Scripture, "a temple of the Holy Ghost,"† though his body descends into the grave, still since he is sealed at it were with the Spirit,‡ of which he has the earnest,‖ is it to be supposed that God will desert him at the most important crisis of his existence, viz. the day of judgment?§ Have we not then some

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* See p. 286. † 1 Cor. vi. 19.

‡ Eph. iv. 30. ‖ Ibid. i. 14.

§ Again, can it be deemed unlikely that men who have saturated their hearts with evil, and continuing impenitent to the end, have deposited such hearts in their sepulchres, may, at the resurrection, reap what they have sown? St. Paul illustrates the idea of a body rising at the last day by the consideration of a grain of corn becoming a plant. As is the seed, so is its produce. May not misery in a future state in great measure result from the unchecked dominion of licentious passions, which have been cherished in this life, but are now in many ways mitigated or controlled? As the good, whom God has influenced in their earthly pilgrimage, are at last taken to Him; so may not the wicked, whom the Devil has influenced, at length naturally be claimed by him as fit

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sure foundation on which to recruit our distressed spirits, and to drive away those dismal apprehensions which might otherwise assail us? Is not trust in God, a principle heretofore discussed, to be extended to the consideration of our position at the last day, as well as of every other condition in which we may be placed?

In regard to the nature of future happiness, our knowledge, as has been seen, is very imperfect. Scripture teaches us in general, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."* We need not therefore be surprised that minute details are withheld. Considerations, however, of the attributes of God and the relations in which He stands to mankind, may lead us to conclude that the enjoyments of a future state will be infinitely more than a compensation for the severest pains of the most devoted martyrs. "What would you do," exclaims Taylor, "if God should command you to kill your eldest son, or to work in the mines for a thousand years together, or to fast all thy lifetime with bread and water? Were

company for himself and his angels? "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matth. xxv. 41.)

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

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not heaven a very great bargain even after all this? And when God requires nothing of us but to live soberly, justly, and godly (which things of themselves are to a man a very great felicity and necessary to our present well-being), shall we think this to be an intolerable burden?" One particular species of satisfaction which Scripture holds out to Christians, is that of meeting again dear friends and relatives, from whom death has separated them. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren (writes St. Paul), concerning them which are asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as those that have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."* We read too of the "spirits of just men made perfect."† Here is an expression in which much is implied. To this state of perfection, unattainable in the present life, we may hope hereafter to ascend. To those who suffer great pain from the consciousness of their many imperfections and errors, this prospect of freedom from the defilement of Adam will alone cause sensations of purest satisfaction and joy. Again, hopes are held out to us of living under the more immediate presence and superintendence of God.

* 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. † Heb. xii. 23.

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As in our purer state we may be more worthy of such honour and enjoyment, so is the prospect exhibited for our encouragement in endeavouring to make ourselves thus pure. "Blessed are the pure in heart," says our Saviour, "for they shall see God."* If we are "ever to be with the Lord,"† "when He shall appear," it will behove us to be "like Him;" we must have "the wedding garment." Otherwise how shall we be fit to dwell in His presence? And "every man," adds St. John, "who hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure."‡

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* Matth. v. 8. † 1 Thess. iv. 17.

‡ 1 John iii. 3. With respect to the happiness of the blessed in a future state, see a treatise by Bishop Mant.

THE END OF BOOK IV.

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CONCLUSION.

The difficulties which it has been attempted to resolve or lessen in the foregoing pages, seem such as are at least worthy of being considered by an intelligent mind which has leisure and inclination to speculate upon its moral condition. And the numerous ties and relations by which we are bound, as well as the hopes and expectations held out to us, can scarcely but force us to reflection. At all events the Author has himself had experience of these difficulties; and in his course of reading has frequently felt that the writers, by whom he has been instructed, have supposed something known and recognised which yet appeared to require illustration or proof. Accordingly he has been led to a consideration of the principles thus implied, and has tried to combine his ideas in such a manner as to lay a foundation for the prosecution of future studies. The trains

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of thought of different persons may of course originate in sources altogether different, and are, doubtless, modified with endless variety. Thinking, however, that difficulties not unlike his own may probably have occurred to others, he has at length endeavoured to explain his views upon paper, hoping that they may do good, and trusting that at least they cannot do harm.

These views, however, are of course preliminary. The phenomena of Nature and the written revelation of God's will lie open to the minds of all; nay more, they claim devoted attention, and afford scope to the continual exercise of men's highest faculties. Our aim is to grow in grace. It is the earnest wish of the sincere Christian, that his knowledge of God's will may be increased and his power of obedience strengthened. In order to obtain these benefits we must use the appointed means. Every day which is granted is an opportunity of moral and religious improvement. Our customary duties, our numerous relations to mankind, our habits of intercourse and conversation, our station in life, our prosperity and adversity, our books, our courses of thought and association of ideas, every thing that we do, or speak, or think, should be considered in connexion with our spiritual welfare. Our feelings of love to men and love to God should be continually cul-

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tivated and improved.* Need it then be said how assiduous we ought to be in those exercises which are more peculiarly religious? In earnest prayer both public and private, in frequent reception of the Supper of the Lord, in diligent study of the character of our divine Master?

In our honest and reverent search for truth, while we gladly receive such proof as is really satisfactory, we shall of course abstain from building theories upon insufficient evidence. "Woe unto him (says a learned writer) who generalizes upon insufficient observation." Whether we admit the evidence we ought not, or do not admit

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* In treating upon the moral culture of the affections as a duty, Dr. Whewell writes as follows: "We can perceive that we have in various ways power over our feelings. Even immediately by the power which we possess of directing our train of thoughts, we can foster or repress an affection. We can call before our minds and dwell upon those features of character and situation which tend to impress on our minds one sentiment or another. We can, for instance, think on all that our parents have done and suffered for us, and can thus move our hearts to a love of them. And above all, the recollection that affections are natural and right will fix and promote them." From these considerations we may ascend to the contemplation of our various relations to God; we may direct our thoughts to the things which Christ has done and suffered for us, and to what He has promised: and we may thus foster our love of God. And above all, the recollection that such love is natural and right will fix and promote it.

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that which we ought, in either case we of course fall into error. Numerous examples of grievous mistakes, beacons for warning, might be collected from the history of mankind. Some we have already considered. There is, however, a class of examples which indeed are obtruded upon our observation, and are particularly suitable to the discussions in which we have been engaged, viz. the divisions and quarrels of those who, as Christians, ought to be united by a bond of Christian brotherhood. In consequence of such dissensions and even bitter animosities, religion itself is contemned by the inconsiderate, and Christianity becomes in some degree a prey to the scoffer. In regard to these differences so frequent, so important, and yet so sad, it may perhaps be allowed to conclude this volume with a few words of caution. In considering then the evidence of religious truth, and, as part thereof, in studying Scripture, let us not merely look to particular passages, but let us also take account of other passages which modify and limit the meaning of the former. The two sets of passages ought to be considered side by side for the sake of qualification and explanation, and not to be opposed to each other as the watchwords of parties. For Holy Scripture is ever coherent; and vehement party-spirit is not favourable to the attain-

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ment of truth.* Let it also be continually remembered, that the motives for studying Scripture comprehend something higher than the hope of exhibiting critical acumen and skill in controversial divinity. We may naturally suppose that doctrines which are most conspicuously and emphatically marked, and are therefore plain even to the unlearned, are those which especially demand our most full and complete recognition: for as is light, so is responsibility. At all events from these doctrines and from the general tone of the whole book, an honest mind, assisted by the Spirit of God, may derive that food and sustenance of which, in the difficulties and trials of life, we all experience such perpetual need.

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* It has been said, with perhaps some truth, "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all."—COLERIDGE, *Aids to Reflection.*

THE END.

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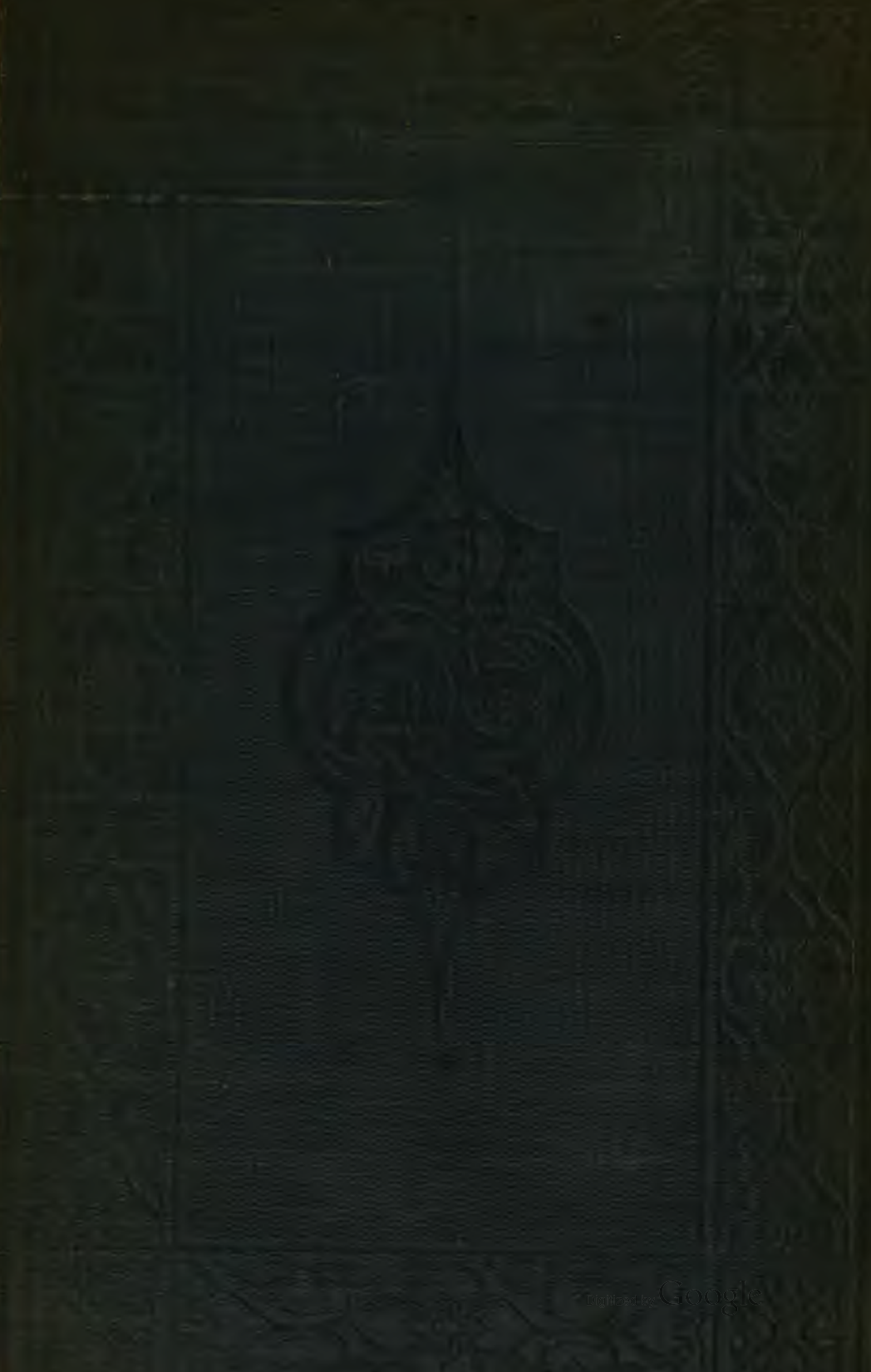
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